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CRISIS OVER BERLIN

American Policy Concerning the Soviet Threats to Berlin,
November 1958 - December 1962

Part I

Renewed Soviet Threats Against Berlin and the Western Response,
November 1958 - April 1959

Research Project No. 614-A
October 1966

Historical Studies Division
Historical Office, Bureau of Public Affairs
Department of State

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EDITORIAL NOTE

This is Part I of a comprehensive study, to be issued in eight parts, which, when completed, will cover American policy concerning the Soviet threats to Berlin November 1958-December 1962. Each part is separately bound. Also separately bound is an Introduction which covers in broad sweep the developments between the final phase of World War II and the outbreak of the Berlin crisis in November 1958.

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CHAPTER I

OPENING PHASE OF THE NEW BERLIN CRISIS, NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1958

A. Khrushchev's Speech of November 10, 1958

A new phase in the Soviet attack on the Western position in Berlin, which presented the Western Powers with one of the most serious challenges since the end of World War II, opened in the autumn of 1958. There had been increasing indications of new Soviet moves with respect to Berlin, such as the speech delivered on October 27, 1958 by Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the State Council of the "German Democratic Republic" (GDR), who claimed that all of Berlin was under the sovereignty of the East German regime and that "continuation of the occupation regime" in West Berlin was in contradiction of existing Four-Power agreements.¹ This statement and similar ones from East German sources prompted newsmen to ask Secretary of State Dulles at his news conference on November 7, 1958 whether he saw "any potential danger in this kind of propaganda campaign." The Secretary stated that there was no danger because the West was solemnly committed to hold West Berlin, "if need be by military force", and that as long as the Communists knew that the West would stand firm there would be no danger to West Berlin.² Nevertheless, the address which Soviet Premier Khrushchev delivered three days later at a Soviet-Polish meeting in Moscow on November 10, 1958 left no doubt that the West was faced not merely with one of the periodic Communist propaganda campaigns but with a major political and diplomatic offensive by the Soviet Union and its satellites.

Most of the Soviet Premier's speech of November 10, 1958 followed the familiar line of Soviet policy and propaganda regarding the need for a German peace treaty and a rapprochement of the "two German states." Khrushchev asserted that the Soviet Union in its zone of occupation, "the German Democratic Republic",

¹Neues Deutschland, Oct. 28, 1958.

²Dept. of State press release 676, Nov. 7, 1958.

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had scrupulously observed the stipulations of the Potsdam Agreement with regard to the eradication of militarism and liquidation of the monopolies while the Western Powers had permitted the revival of militarism and economic imperialism in the German Federal Republic. These familiar accusations against the Western Powers were given a new emphasis, however, when the Soviet Premier declared that the United States, Britain, and France had violated the Potsdam Agreement in all its parts except for one, namely, "the so-called Four-Power status of Berlin." The reason for this exception, according to Khrushchev, was that the agreement on Berlin was advantageous to the Western Powers "and to them alone", enabling them to turn Berlin into "some kind of a state within a state", to conduct from there subversive activities against the Communist countries, and to enjoy the right of unrestricted communication between Berlin and West Germany "through the air space, by the railways, highways and waterways of the German Democratic Republic." Therefore, Khrushchev declared, the time had come for the Soviet Union to draw the appropriate conclusion from the violation of the Potsdam Agreement and to reconsider its attitude toward that part of the Agreement which benefited the Western Powers. The Soviet Premier stated that

the time has obviously arrived for the signatories of the Potsdam Agreement to renounce the remnants of the occupation regime in Berlin and thereby make it possible to create a normal situation in the capital of the German Democratic Republic. The Soviet Union, for its part would hand over to the sovereign German Republic the functions in Berlin that are still exercised by Soviet agencies.

Khrushchev called on the Western Powers to seek agreement with the GDR on questions concerning Berlin. As for the Soviet Union, it would honor its obligations as an ally of the GDR deriving from the Warsaw Treaty, would regard any attack on the GDR "as an attack on the Soviet Union, on all the Warsaw Treaty countries", and would rise to the defense of the GDR, thereby defending "the vital security interests of the Soviet Union, of the entire socialist camp, and of the cause of world peace."³

³Documents on Germany, 1944-1961 (Print of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 87th Cong., 1st sess., Dec. 1961), pp. 339-343.

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B. Western Reactions

1. Initial Evaluation by the Department of State

The Department of State conjectured, in a circular telegram of November 13 to United States posts, that the Khrushchev speech and its precursors might portend a Soviet diplomatic and propaganda offensive. But it stressed that Soviet actions were being hinted at only cautiously and that Soviet intentions were not yet clear. The Department believed that the Soviet Union might be pursuing one or several objectives, such as testing the Western Powers' resolve to maintain their position in Berlin, forcing them to recognize the East German regime, preventing the emergence of West Germany as a nuclear power, or forcing the withdrawal of Western troops from West Germany. The Department instructed the posts "not to convey the impression of excitement and undue anxiety", pointing out that Khrushchev's basic argumentation on Berlin was merely a repetition of familiar Soviet arguments used since 1948. While not discounting Khrushchev's threat to relinquish to the GDR the remaining Soviet responsibilities in Berlin, the Department regarded it, at least in part, as a "probing attempt in a war of nerves and as propaganda statement".⁴

In a memorandum to the President the Department emphasized the most dangerous and presumably most immediate threat implied in Khrushchev's speech when it stated that "this action seems clearly related to a long-standing Soviet desire to force the Western Powers into de facto recognition of the East German regime through the creation of situations on allied access routes to Berlin calculated to compel the Western Powers to deal with East German officials."⁵ This was indeed the essence of the Berlin problem which in one form or another was to confront the Western Powers during the next few years.

⁴To all diplomatic posts, circ. tel. 622, Nov. 13, 1958, official use only.

⁵Memorandum by the Acting Secretary (Herter) for the President, Nov. 13, 1958, secret.

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2. Discussion of a Tripartite Démarche or Declaration

From the outset the Department of State gave consideration "to the desirability of some tripartite reaffirmation of the Western position on Berlin", a reaffirmation designed to remove any Soviet doubt as to Allied determination and to forestall Soviet moves which might lead to a clash. The British and Germans argued, however, as the Department informed the President, that such a declaration "would demonstrate our nervousness more than our determination". The Department, at first, was inclined to agree too that it was advisable to wait a few days before issuing a tripartite statement, and it suggested to the President that "our wisest course is to avoid actions which might over-dramatize the present situation."⁶ The French at the beginning were opposed to a tripartite declaration but were willing to consider a tripartite confidential démarche to be made in Moscow at some later stage.⁷ But a few days later the Department came out strongly in favor of a tripartite démarche in Moscow. One of the main reasons for this shift was presumably a step taken by the Soviet Ambassador at Bonn and its effect on the Government of the Federal Republic.

On November 20, 1958, Ambassador A. A. Smirnov called on Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and Foreign Minister Heinrich von Brentano and announced that the Soviet Union in the very near future would notify the United States, the United Kingdom, and France that it was going to abolish the occupation statute for Berlin.⁸ The same day Adenauer wrote to Secretary Dulles and

⁶Ibid.

⁷From Paris, tel. 1762, Nov. 13, 1958, confidential; tel. 1794, Nov. 15, confidential.

⁸From Bonn, tel. 1080, Nov. 20, 1958, secret.

Smirnov ignored a comment by Brentano that there was no "occupation statute". His reference to such a "statute" followed a frequent Soviet practice of using this term to identify the agreements among the Western Powers and the Soviet Union regarding the occupation and control of Germany, especially the "Protocol on Zones of Occupation and Administration of the 'Greater Berlin' area", of Sept. 12, 1944, amended Nov. 14, 1944 and July 26, 1945, and the "Agreement on Control Machinery in Germany", of Nov. 14, 1944, amended May 1, 1945. For texts, see Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 1-8, 10-11, 20-23.

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expressed to him his grave anxiety over the situation. Adenauer felt that the political action announced by the Soviet Union was obviously designed "to test the firmness and trustworthiness of the joint policy of the free world", and he urged that the West stand firm and not permit the Soviet Union to undermine the Western position even gradually and in roundabout ways.⁹

In a similar letter to British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan (the text of which was read to the Department by the Counselor of the British Embassy), Adenauer expressed the hope that the United Kingdom would make a representation in Moscow as to the fateful consequences of the act contemplated by the Soviet Government.¹⁰ The prospect of the impending Soviet announcement and the desire to reassure the German Chancellor seem to have influenced the Department in deciding in favor of a tripartite démarche.

On November 23 the Department instructed the Embassy at Bonn to coordinate with the British and French preparations for a tripartite démarche to be made in Moscow on November 24 in which it would be stated "that a unilateral renunciation of the obligations relating to Berlin" would be legally invalid, "could in no way affect the rights and duties of the four Powers in Berlin", and would constitute a unilateral attempt to terminate quadripartitely agreed arrangements. The Department made it clear that the purpose of the proposed note was "to seize the initiative by putting clearly on record our position, if possible before the Soviets deliver their note."¹¹

It soon became apparent that the French were questioning the opportuneness of the timing of the contemplated démarche and were opposed to giving any indication of panic, while the British held that the language of the proposed statement was better and more effective for private than public use.¹²

⁹Letter, Adenauer to Dulles, Nov. 20, 1958, secret.

¹⁰To Bonn, tel. 1062, Nov. 22, 1958, secret.

¹¹To Bonn, tel. 1067, Nov. 22, 1958, secret; to Paris, tel. TOPOL 1773, Nov. 22, secret.

¹²To Bonn, tel. 1070, Nov. 23, 1958, secret; from London, tel. 2850, Nov. 24, secret.

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Thereupon the United States abandoned the idea of a démarche in Moscow and proposed instead that the original note be adapted for use as a note to the Federal Republic. [Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Foy Kohler explained to the German Ambassador, Wilhelm Grewe, that this might be more adroit because the note to Moscow might have caused the Soviet Union to freeze its position before it was thoroughly committed to a course of action while a note to Bonn would make all the points which the United States would want to register in Moscow.¹³ The French, however, insisted that even a tripartite note to the Federal Republic might appear as a sign of fear or nervousness, and their rejection of the proposal became final when Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Murville informed Ambassador Amory Houghton on November 25 that President de Gaulle was opposed to any tripartite note whether it was addressed to the Soviet Union or to the Federal Republic.¹⁴ The moment for seizing the diplomatic initiative before the Soviet Union committed itself more fully with regard to Berlin definitely passed on November 27 when the Soviet Union presented its note on Berlin to the Western Powers.]

3. Discussion of What To Do If East Germans Assumed Control of Access to Berlin

In the early phase of the crisis created by Khrushchev's speech of November 10, besides considering whether to dispatch a tripartite note intended to forestall the transfer to the East Germans of control over Allied access to Berlin, the Western Powers engaged in mutual consultation on how to deal with such a transfer if it in fact took place. The Embassies of the Three Western Powers in Bonn and the Western Commandants in Berlin discussed the application to the new situation of existing contingency plans for dealing with Soviet or East German action

¹³To Bonn, tel. 1072, Nov. 24, 1958, secret; memorandum by Vigderman (EUR) of conversation between Deputy Under Secretary Murphy and French Ambassador Alphand, Nov. 24, secret; memorandum by Lampson (EUR) of conversation among Murphy, Kohler, and Ambassador Grewe, Nov. 24, secret.

¹⁴To Paris, tel. 1909, Nov. 24, 1958, secret; from Paris, tels. 1950 and 1956, Nov. 25, both secret.

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against the Western position in Berlin.¹⁵ The Western Powers also considered how to act with regard to the political implications of actual East German control over access; in this connection they studied a number of ideas and suggestions which were of great significance in the history of the Berlin crisis which began in November 1958--above all, the "agent" or "agency" theory and the British memorandum of November 17.

The "Agency" Theory. On November 17, West German Ambassador Wilhelm Grewe told Secretary Dulles that contacts with representatives of the GDR would have to be intensified in a dangerous way if the Soviet authorities should turn over their responsibilities to them. Dulles declared that, as far as practical dealings with persons purporting to be GDR officials were concerned, he personally did not feel too strongly one way or the other, and that one might treat them as agents of the Soviet Union or just deal with them. Dulles referred to the fact that the United States dealt with the Chinese Communists in certain practical situations and, while not recognizing them politically, recognized them as a force to be dealt with, as, for example, in the case of the Korean armistice negotiations and the Geneva negotiations on Indochina. The Secretary emphasized that his remarks did not represent any definite view since there had not yet been a complete exchange of views with the British and French and with the Federal Republic. Grewe mentioned that his Government was not too happy about a report in the New York Times of the previous day indicating that the United States might be prepared to deal with East German officials as agents of the Soviet Union. He predicted that direct negotiations with the GDR similar to those with the Chinese Communists would create great psychological difficulties in Bonn.¹⁶

When Grew saw Deputy Under Secretary of State Robert Murphy and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Foy Kohler on November 24,

¹⁵From Berlin, tel. 315, Nov. 11, 1958, confidential; from Bonn, tel. 1027, Nov. 13, confidential; to Bonn, tel. 1002, Nov. 14, secret. Concerning the nature of the contingency plans, see post, pp. 19-20.

¹⁶Memorandum by Hillenbrand (EUR) of conversation between Secretary Dulles and Ambassador Grewe, Nov. 17, 1958, secret.

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he told them that he had reported to his Government that the Secretary's remarks did not represent final United States policy but merely the Secretary's thinking aloud. As could be expected, Bonn did not like the idea. Murphy stated that there were unavoidable contacts with East German officials and pointed out that the Federal Republic went even further in its technical contacts with the East German regime. When Grewe tried to envisage certain practical situations which might arise in case of GDR inspections of trains, Murphy declared that the United States did not like to speculate too much about hypothetical situations but that it would maintain its right of ingress and egress with respect to Berlin.¹⁷

Ambassador Grewe's characterization of the Secretary's remarks about the "agents", or "agency", theory as "thinking aloud" might equally be applied to some of the statements which Dulles made in his news conference of November 26. Asked whether the Western Powers would deal with East German officials at the checkpoints "as agents of the Soviet Union", the Secretary replied: "We might, yes." Dulles explained his reasoning along the lines of his conversation with Grewe on November 17, emphasizing that a distinction could be drawn between dealing with East Germans as agents and dealing with them in a way involving de facto recognition. In reply to a question whether it was an agreed policy between the three Western Powers and the Federal Republic to deal with the East Germans as agents, Dulles declared, "I think that it is agreed between us that we might."¹⁸

To counteract any unfavorable effects which the Secretary's press conference statements might produce in Germany, the Department suggested to the Embassy at Bonn that in talks with German officials and the press Embassy officials should emphasize that the Secretary had made it clear that "we would not deal with East German officials in any way which involved our acceptance of the East German regime as substitute for the Soviet Union in discharging obligations and responsibilities of the Soviet Union." The Department's guidelines also pointed out that the Secretary's

¹⁷Memorandum by Lampson (EUR) of conversation among Murphy, Kohler, Grewe, and others, Nov. 24, 1958, secret.

¹⁸Dept. of State press release 721, Nov. 26, 1958.

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only reference to dealings with the GDR occurred in connection with efforts by correspondents "to elicit detailed analysis of hypothetical situations" and that the Secretary did not refer to an agreement to deal with the GDR but to the "refusal to exclude insignificant dealings in any and all circumstances."18a

Dulles' news conference remarks were almost immediately overshadowed, however, by the Soviet note of the next day with its specific demands and its announced time limit for a solution of the Berlin problem. Nevertheless, most unfavorable reaction was reported from West Berlin, where Mayor Willy Brandt expressed to the United States Assistant Chief of Mission his "shock and dismay" at the Secretary's statements, which he found "incomprehensible."19

To keep the discussion of the "agency" theory in proper perspective, it ought to be said that the possibility of such an approach to dealing with GDR personnel at the checkpoints had been discussed among the Three Western Powers for some time prior to the crisis of November 1958. The principal flaw in this theory was that it became untenable once the Soviet Union or the GDR explicitly denied the existence of an "agent" relationship. The significance of this theory, however, and the reason why it persisted was that it seemed to provide the Allies with a concept which could enable them under certain conditions to accept the transfer of control functions at the checkpoints to the East Germans without granting any recognition, even de facto, to the Ulbricht regime.

The British Memorandum of November 17. Much more far-reaching than the "agent" theory in their implications for Western relations with the East German regime were the proposals contained in the British memorandum which was handed to the United States and France on November 17. The main points of this memorandum were as follows:

We should proceed on the assumption that sooner or later Khrushchev will "hand over to the Sovereign German Democratic Republic those functions in Berlin which are still maintained by

18a To Bonn, tel. 1115, Nov. 26, 1958, official use only.

19 From Berlin, tel. 412, Nov. 27, 1958, confidential.

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Soviet organs" as he had threatened in his speech of November 10. We can not stop him from carrying out this threat, and the main question to decide is therefore "how to react when he does it." But we must also proceed from the assumption that we will not withdraw our forces from Berlin or abandon the West Berliners and "that we would resort to force with all the risks that this might entail" rather than "submit to being starved out". The Foreign Office believed that any suggestion that we might weaken on this point "would be as fatal to NATO as it would be dishonorable". The immediate issue, however, will be whether to submit to dealing on practical matters relating to transport and communications with representatives of the GDR in the same manner in which we have hitherto dealt with the Soviet authorities. A refusal by the Allies to deal with the East German authorities could precipitate a new blockade of Berlin which in the end "might have to be broken by force." A decision must depend on the ability to stage and maintain indefinitely a successful Allied airlift in case of a blockade, but examination of the technical problems involved suggested "that we would not be able to supply Berlin by airlift for much more than a year." Consequently, the real long-term choice would lie between dealing with the GDR authorities and using force. The main argument against the former alternative is that "this would bring us rapidly on to a slippery slope at the end of which would lie full and formal recognition of the GDR." Between the alternatives of dealing with GDR representatives and of having to resort to force to break a blockade, "it would seem clearly to be in our interest to choose the first alternative." Therefore, we should work out a set of rules for our authorities enabling them "to deal with the GDR authorities without implying that this action constituted recognition of the GDR Government and while maintaining the theory that the Soviet authorities remained responsible." Nevertheless, nobody should be under the illusion that such a modus vivendi would be allowed to operate for very long. "The slippery slope might prove to be a steep one", and we would soon be faced with the further choice of "recognizing the GDR or exposing Berlin to a blockade which would in the last resort have to be broken by force". Khrushchev has presumably calculated that, confronted with this choice, we would prefer to recognize the GDR. "So far as the United Kingdom is concerned he would be right." Khrushchev is trying to maneuver the West into having to choose between a resort to force and recognition of the GDR, knowing that "nobody in the West" would believe avoiding the latter "to be worth a war".

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The British memorandum summed up the presumable choices as (a) abandoning Berlin, (b) resorting to force, (c) staying in Berlin but dealing with and, if necessary, ultimately recognizing the GDR. It declared that course (a) was out of the question and that course (c) was "greatly to be preferred to course (b)."20

British Explanations of the Memorandum. Something of the prevailing climate of opinion in the Foreign Office which produced the memorandum of November 17 is revealed in statements made by officials at the working level of the Foreign Office (as reported by the Embassy) to the effect that the British public would "never go along with the risk of war" over recognition of the GDR, and that the Federal Republic was "unreliable" and "uncooperative."21

The crucial question was, of course, whether and to what extent these statements reflected, and the memorandum of November 17 represented, the firm policy of Prime Minister Macmillan and of his Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd. Lloyd told Ambassador Whitney on November 18 that he had not seen the entire message before it was sent to Washington and that it did not have his specific approval. It was nevertheless "quite apparent" to Whitney that the memorandum "had a lot of his thinking in it."

At a subsequent meeting with Lloyd and his aides, Whitney obtained some clarifications of the British views which, he hoped, might eliminate certain misunderstandings occasioned by the original memorandum. At this meeting Lloyd asserted that the memorandum was no more than a stimulus for discussion and that he was anxious to remain "on the same wave length" with the United States on the Berlin problem. Nor was there, in Lloyd's opinion, any disagreement as to getting on "a slippery slope" by making de facto arrangements with the GDR.

20Memorandum from the British Embassy, Nov. 17, 1958, secret; an abstract of the British memorandum was attached to a memorandum by Merchant (EUR) to the Acting Secretary, Nov. 19, 1958, secret.

21From London, tel. 2753, Nov. 19, 1958, and tel. 2767, Nov. 20, both secret.

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But the British felt that the bottom of the slope would be reached by recognition of the GDR and that there was no reason why that should lead to ejection of the Allies from Berlin. Lloyd conceded the validity of the Embassy's point that the slope might not end there and that such action would represent a revision of Allied policy of opposition to the partition of Germany which would hardly be acceptable to Adenauer. But he asserted that the essence of the British argument was that, if the Germans should decide to conclude arrangements with the GDR rather than bear the cost of a blockade of Berlin, and if such arrangements led or amounted to West German recognition of the GDR, the British would not object and would not try to be "more royal than the king." The Foreign Secretary expressed worry that the memorandum might give the impression that the United Kingdom almost welcomed recognition of the GDR, while his point--on which, he said, Cove de Murville was in agreement with him--simply was that implied recognition of the GDR was better than the risk of war. The purpose of the memorandum would be served, he said, if it resulted in further study of the Berlin problem before the situation became acute.²²

The British Minister at Washington also minimized the psychological effect of a course leading to the ultimate recognition of the GDR, arguing that "if you know where you are going you can do it gracefully".²³ On November 20, under instruction from his Government, he told the Department of State that the memorandum was put up for discussion only and that the views of the United Kingdom would naturally be influenced by those of its allies. He also stressed that Lloyd favored robust reaction to deter Soviet action and disliked the idea of recognizing the GDR.²⁴

French, German, and American Reactions to the British Memorandum. In the French Foreign Office, apparently, there were some differences of views between the working level and Foreign Minister Couve de Murville concerning the British memorandum.

²²From London, tel. 2752, Nov. 19, 1958, secret.

²³To Bonn, tel. 1036, Nov. 20, 1958, secret.

²⁴To Bonn, tel. 1051, Nov. 21, 1958, secret.

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The Foreign Minister reportedly felt that continued insistence on "non-existence" of the GDR might be unrealistic and that the British memorandum was sound. The working level, on the other hand, was disturbed at the weakness shown in the memorandum and at British pessimism regarding the possibilities of an airlift; Secretary General Louis Joxe on a visit to Washington, told Acting Secretary of State Herter that the British were already compromising the Western position in their memorandum. (Assistant Secretary of State Livingston Merchant commented, too, on this occasion, that the memorandum on first reading seemed needlessly defeatist, although further reports might show that this reading was not accurate.)²⁵ The views of the French advisors and of the United States apparently had some impression on Couve de Murville, because he seemed to become increasingly reserved in the matter of the British memorandum and told the British Ambassador that on reflection he thought there was something in the American criticism of its content.²⁶

It was hardly surprising that the leaders of the Federal Republic had very strong--and entirely negative--reactions to the British paper. When Brentano received the memorandum from the hands of the British Ambassador, he read it and, as reported by the American Embassy, "visibly found it most distasteful."²⁷ On November 21 the German Foreign Minister expressed himself to Ambassador Bruce with "utmost seriousness" about the possible consequences of a transfer to the GDR of the Soviet controls over access to Berlin, and he emphasized that the Soviet Union would back down if the West took a firm stand. He declared that he had been "horrified" by the British memorandum and was compelled to say that those who had worked on it were grossly ignorant of its implications and consequences. Bruce told Brentano that, while he had not yet received instructions on

²⁵From Paris, tel. 1862, Nov. 19, 1958, secret; memorandum by McBride (EUR) of conversation among the Acting Secretary, Joxe, and others, Nov. 20, confidential.

²⁶From Paris, tel. 1918, Nov. 22, 1958, secret; from London, tel. 2799, Nov. 21, secret.

²⁷From Bonn, tel. 1083, Nov. 20, 1958, secret.

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the subject of the British document, he strongly doubted that the United States would subscribe to it.²⁸

There was indeed scarcely any doubt that the United States would not agree to the British memorandum. At the same time, however, the United States was reluctant to stress differences with the British at a time when allied unity in the face of the Soviet challenge was of the utmost importance. In the discussions with Secretary General Joxe of the French Foreign Office, referred to earlier, Herter stated that the United Kingdom's position had been somewhat misinterpreted, for the British had proposed only recognition of certain de facto acts of the GDR and not recognition of the East German regime itself.²⁹

When the United States finally gave its official position regarding the British memorandum to the British and French Embassies on November 21, it emphasized first of all that there was agreement on not permitting West Berlin's freedom to be compromised "by starvation or otherwise" and on resorting to force "to make good our commitment". But the United States felt that the alternative proposed in the British memorandum, i.e., "unrestrained dealing with the GDR up to and including recognition", did not solve the basic problem and only postponed for a while the point "at which the choice again becomes use of force or further yielding to pressure to save the city for the West." In adopting the British line "you arrive at best at a temporary point of stabilization", and since reunification, "the only real long-term solution" to the Berlin problem, was not envisaged within this period of temporary truce, dealing with the GDR would not be justified as a means to gain time. The United States made it also clear that it could not accept "for the sake of a temporary period of stabilization" the lasting damage to the Allied cause resulting from dealing with the GDR, a course which would ultimately lead to recognition of that regime. By taking this course the West would deliver "a staggering blow" to the confidence placed by the Free World "in our firmness in the face of threats", in

²⁸From Bonn, tel. 1096, Nov. 21, 1958, secret.

²⁹Memorandum by McBride (EUR) of conversation among the Acting Secretary, Joxe, and others, Nov. 20, 1958, confidential.

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a situation where the West's legal right was "fairly precise." Above all, by accepting the British memorandum, "the goal of German reunification on any terms suitable to the West would have been practically surrendered."³⁰

C. The Soviet Note Regarding Berlin of November 27, 1958

1. The Soviet Note

While consultations and discussions among the Western Powers in anticipation of the next Soviet move on Berlin were being carried on, the Soviet Union "dropped the second shoe" and gave further indication of its intentions in similar notes handed to the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Federal Republic on November 27. After reciting at length its grievances with respect to Western policies on the German question, the Soviet Union gave formal notice that it regarded as "null and void" the tripartite agreements of September 12, 1944 on the zones of operation in Germany and on the status of Greater Berlin as well as "the related supplementary agreements", including the quadripartite agreement of May 1, 1945 on the control machinery in Germany. The Soviet Union said that it would enter into negotiations with the GDR concerning the transfer to its government of "functions temporarily performed by the Soviet authorities by virtue of the above mentioned Allied agreements."

The Soviet Government stated that, while it believed that the "most correct and natural" solution of the Berlin problem was the incorporation of all of Berlin "within the state in whose territory it is situated", it also realized that the "unrealistic policy" of the Western Powers toward the GDR would make it difficult for them to accept this solution. The Soviet Union therefore proposed a solution based on the conversion of West Berlin into a demilitarized "free city" which "could have its own government and run its own economic, administrative, and other affairs." The four Powers as well as "both of the German states" would undertake "to respect the status of West Berlin as a free city", and the Soviet Union would not object if the United Nations participated, "in one way or another, in observing the free-city status of West

³⁰To Bonn, tel. 1058, Nov. 22, secret.

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Berlin." If the Soviet proposal to negotiate regarding the conversion of Berlin into a demilitarized free city was not acceptable to the Western Powers, however, there would "no longer remain any topic for negotiations between the former occupying powers on the Berlin question."

The Soviet Government proposed that during the next six months no changes be made in the existing procedures for military traffic of the Western Powers from West Berlin to the Federal Republic. But it warned that if such a period were not utilized to reach an adequate agreement the Soviet Union would conclude an agreement with the GDR on the basis of which the latter would "fully deal with questions concerning its space, i.e., exercise its sovereignty on land, water, and in the air." Simultaneously, all contacts between military representatives and officials in Germany of the Soviet Union and of the Western Powers on questions pertaining to Berlin would terminate.

The Western Powers were warned in the note not to talk to the Soviet Union "in the language of brute force", and reference was made to alleged statements that the West would not "recognize the Soviet Union's decision to relinquish its part in the maintenance of the occupation status in Berlin." The Soviet Union and the other socialist states, the Soviet Government declared, would jointly defend "their rights and their state frontiers", and any aggression against any member state of the Warsaw Treaty "will be regarded by all its participants as an act of aggression against them all and will immediately cause appropriate retaliation."³¹

2. Immediate American Reactions

The United States reacted immediately to the Soviet note. In a statement issued on the day the note was delivered, the Department of State promised that the note would receive careful study but emphasized that the Western Powers were "solemnly committed to the security of the Western sectors of Berlin", that the United States "would not acquiesce in a unilateral repudiation by the Soviet Union of its obligations and responsibilities in relation to Berlin", and that it would consult with

³¹Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 348-363.

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the British and French Governments as well as with the Federal Republic and with NATO.³² Much sharper than this public statement was Dulles' characterization of the Soviet note in a conversation with Alphand on November 28 as "vicious and unacceptable".³³

D. Coordination of Western Policies

Speedy coordination of Western policies now became imperative. Even before the Soviet note was received the Department was setting up an informal ad hoc working group in Washington with expected British, French, and when appropriate, German participation, an arrangement that was not intended, however, to replace normal tripartite and quadripartite consultative processes in Bonn.³⁴ After the Soviet note had been delivered the British Government urged in Washington that consultations on the ambassadorial level be held in Bonn and that the Three Ambassadors and State Secretary Scherpenberg of the West German Foreign Office constitute a kind of standing committee to coordinate views and policy. The British also suggested that the Ambassadors at Bonn should undertake a review of Berlin contingency plans very soon. The United States fully agreed to these proposals and appropriate instructions were sent to the Embassy in Bonn.³⁵

Meanwhile, the obvious suggestion was put forward that the Soviet note and the Berlin problem should be taken up by the four Foreign Ministers in connection with the NATO Ministerial Meeting scheduled to be held in Paris in mid-December. This was agreed to, on the understanding that meanwhile consultations

³²Dept. of State press release 722, Nov. 27, 1958.

³³Memorandum by Brown (EUR) of conversation between Dulles and Alphand, Nov. 28, 1958, secret.

³⁴To Bonn, tel. 1048, Nov. 21, 1958, confidential.

³⁵To Bonn, tel. 1122, Nov. 28, 1958, secret.

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would proceed at Bonn and Washington and that a senior-officers meeting at Paris would precede that of the four Foreign Ministers.³⁶

1. Preparations for a Western Foreign Ministers Meeting on Berlin

Ambassadorial Talks. Preparations for the consideration of the Berlin problem at the Quadripartite and NATO Foreign Ministers Meetings in Paris went on in the three capitals of the Western Allies and in Bonn, where the three Ambassadors were consulting with the German Foreign Office. In an instruction of December 8 the Department suggested that the Three Embassies should exchange opinions with the Germans regarding the shape of the Western response to the Soviet note and should prepare for the Paris meetings a quadripartite report "summarizing points of agreement and disagreement" and containing recommendations for action. Also, the Three Embassies might begin the rewriting of current Berlin contingency plans but without German participation, "at least initially."³⁷

On the same day this instruction was received in Bonn, Brentano handed the three Ambassadors a list of questions which should be clarified before the Paris meetings. The questions dealt with the form as well as with the substance of the reply, the problem of counter-measures, and the manner in which the Berlin issue ought to be taken up in Paris.

The three Allies reacted quickly to Brentano's questionnaire. The French felt that the reply should be made soon, that it should be short and in the form of a tripartite note. The British, on the other hand, believed that the reply should not be rushed but be delivered before the opening of the Soviet Party Congress in January, that it should be sent in the form

³⁶From Bonn, tel. 1137, Nov. 28, 1958, secret, and tel. 1144, Nov. 29, confidential; to Bonn, tel. 1133, Nov. 29, confidential; from Paris, tel. 2015, Nov. 29, 1958, confidential; to Paris, tel. 1984, Dec. 1, confidential; from Paris, tel. 2065, Dec. 2, confidential; memorandum by Kohler (EUR), dated Dec. 1, of telephone conversations with Alphand and Manet (French Embassy), Nov. 29 and Dec. 1, 1958, confidential.

³⁷To Bonn, tel. 1201, Dec. 8, 1958, secret.

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of separate notes different in detail but "identical in operative parts", and that it should contain a historical rebuttal of the Soviet argument. The British and French agreed that no counterproposals on Berlin should be offered but that the three Powers should be willing to discuss Berlin in the context of German reunification and European security. They also agreed that the NATO communiqué should contain a strong statement on Berlin. The United States, offered the following preliminary views: that the reply must contain a restatement "of our basic position" on Germany and Berlin, a refutation of the historical and legal arguments of the Soviet note, and a rejection of the "free city" proposal; that it should have "constructive tones", should recognize the interrelations of the problems of Berlin, German reunification, European security, and disarmament, and should "seize the opportunity for a new diplomatic offensive"; and, finally, that if the Allies reached agreement on the revision of contingency planning they might also convey to the USSR a warning of our intentions" in accordance with such plans. 38

American Proposals for Revised Contingency Plans. The talk of revision of contingency planning signaled new United States proposals sent to Bonn in a joint State-Defense message of December 11 and also handed to the British and French Embassies at Washington on the same day. [The United States declared that the "agency theory" which had been one of the underlying assumptions of existing Berlin contingency plans had broken down, inasmuch as the Soviet note of November 27 implied that the "principal" (USSR) and the "agent" (GDR) denied such a relationship. Thus, by withdrawing unilaterally from its functions of an occupying power regarding Berlin, the Soviet Union would create a vacuum which the three Western Powers would be justified in filling by taking over control of the Autobahn and rail traffic between Berlin and the Federal Republic. In no event could the GDR become the beneficiary of] (b1) (a5)

38 From Bonn, tel. 1204, Dec. 8, 1958, and tel. 1205, Dec. 8; from Paris, tel. 2166, Dec. 10; from London, tel. 3137, Dec. 11; all confidential. To Bonn, tel. 1243, Dec. 11, 1958, secret; this instruction, with some changes, paraphrases the main portion of the introductory section of Position Paper PNM D-9/2 of Dec. 11, 1958, secret, NATO Ministerial Meeting, Paris, Dec. 16-18, 1958, "The Soviet Note of Nov. 27 and the Berlin situation".

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a relinquishment by the USSR of its obligations regarding Berlin. Accordingly, since the United States believed that dealing with GDR officials at the checkpoints would be considered by the Germans as a first step toward recognition of the GDR regime, and that highly unfavorable conclusions as to the Allied position on Germany would be drawn by the Federal Republic and by West Berlin, the Embassy should urge reconsideration of existing contingency plans so as to eliminate all proposals for dealing with GDR officials at the checkpoints. In the place of the existing plans the United States proposed a five-point plan of action.

Point A provided for a démarche in Moscow: The Ambassadors of the three Western Powers would tell the Soviet Government that the three Powers continued to hold it fully responsible under quadripartite agreements concerning Berlin; that Soviet withdrawal from control functions could not affect the right of the Allied Powers to have unrestricted access; that they would not tolerate any GDR interference with their traffic to and from Berlin; that they expected their ground traffic to move freely and their aircraft to have guarantee of flight safety in the air corridors and in the Berlin control zone. Points B and C provided for the continued flow of Allied train and motor traffic to Berlin in case of Soviet withdrawal from the checkpoints and for instructions to the commanders of trains or convoys to refuse to present any documentation to GDR control officials or to comply with instructions given by them. Point D contained the most crucial provision, namely, that an attempt would be made to reopen access through the use of "limited military force" to demonstrate "our determination to maintain surface access." The Soviet Union and the East Germans must not be allowed to have any doubts on that score, and even if force was not resorted to at once the right to resume interrupted traffic and the intention to do so by force, if necessary, must be asserted. The Embassy was told for its own information only that the purpose of the resort to force was "to test Soviet intentions." Last, point E provided for consideration of additional steps by the three Powers to guarantee unrestricted air access to Berlin.³⁹

³⁹To Bonn, tel. 1236, Dec. 11, 1958, secret; Point C of this telegram contained a reference to draft contingency instructions issued in Germany to Allied personnel (transmitted (footnote continued on following page)

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Working Group Meeting in Paris, December 13. On December 13, the day before the meeting of the four Foreign Ministers, a quadripartite working group assembled in Paris to coordinate the drafting of a reply to the Soviet note and of a communiqué to be issued by the Foreign Ministers on the basis of the work done in the four Western capitals. The United States was represented by Martin J. Hillenbrand, Director of the Office of German Affairs in the Department of State; the United Kingdom, by Sir Horace Rumbold, Assistant Under Secretary of State in the Foreign Office; France, by Jean Laloy, Minister Counselor in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Federal Republic, by Ambassador Wilhelm Grewe.

This group worked from a questionnaire prepared by the French on the basis of the questions handed to the Western Ambassadors by Brentano on December 8. The deliberations resulted in a decision that two principal points should be left for consideration by the four Foreign Ministers. The Foreign Ministers should make the decision (a) whether the communiqué to be issued by them should be substantive or non-committal, and (b) whether the West should present counterproposals in its replies to the Soviet note or should refuse to do so "until the Soviets withdraw the ultimative character of their note." With regard to these two points the Germans made it clear that they had already taken a position. They wanted "firm, substantive language" in the communiqué and they were against making counterproposals at this time. The whole group was in agreement, however, that counterproposals, if they were made, should not be limited to

in tel. 422 from Berlin, Nov. 28, 1958, and in USAREUR message SX 79220P, Nov. 27, both secret). According to these instructions, if the GDR checkpoint officials should refuse to let a vehicle pass or to produce a Soviet officer to whom documentation would be shown, the convoy or vehicle commander should turn back and report to the U.S. checkpoint. Aide-mémoire to the British and French Embassies on "Berlin Contingency Plans", Dec. 11, 1958, secret; memorandum by McFarland (EUR) of conversation among Kohler (EUR), Jackling (British Embassy), and Manet (French Embassy), Dec. 11, secret.

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Berlin but should refer to the German problem as a whole. The group did not discuss the substance of such possible counter-proposals.⁴⁰

Adenauer-Spaak Differences Concerning a Four-Power Communiqué.
The question of the communiqué to be issued by the four Foreign Ministers involved a real difference of view between the Germans, who favored a strong communiqué, and NATO Secretary General Spaak, who did not want to see the four Foreign Ministers take decisions which, he felt, were properly in NATO's sphere. German concern over this matter was strong and Chancellor Adenauer had taken up the matter in a message sent to Dulles on the eve of the Paris meetings.

The Chancellor had stressed in this message that the communiqué should be "very clear and unequivocal" and had stated his belief that if the Soviet Union should detect in the communiqué any signs that "we were prepared to consider any restrictions of the rights of the three Western Powers in Berlin" it would result in a "genuine danger for world peace." Adenauer also went into the matter of counterproposals and made it clear that he did not believe negotiations on the German problem should be conducted "under pressure with regard to time and subject to an ultimatum-like demand" by Khrushchev.⁴¹

Spaak, on the other hand, told Dulles in a conversation in Paris on December 13 that it would be "terrible" if decisions were taken by the four Powers and publicly announced before the NATO meeting opened. Dulles agreed that it would be better to withhold any substantive conclusions reached by the Foreign

⁴⁰From Paris, tel. SECTO 4, Dec. 14, 1958, confidential. A slightly altered version of the contents of a major portion of this telegram is in an unsigned and undated memorandum, "Quadripartite Meeting of Foreign Ministers, Paris, December 14, 1958: Four Power Discussion of Soviet Note on Berlin," secret; attached to it is a copy of the questionnaire referred to in the text with annotations by the U.S. Delegation.

⁴¹From Bonn, tel. 1245, Dec. 11, 1958, secret.

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Ministers until after the NATO discussions on Berlin but pointed out that it would be necessary to say something about the four Foreign Ministers' having met and being in agreement. ⁴²

United States Delegation Meeting in Paris, December 13.
The issues to be debated by the four Foreign Ministers on December 14 were the subject of an exchange of views within the United States delegation on December 13. Dulles first pointed to the differences of opinion as to whether a proposal for general negotiations should be included in the reply to the Soviet note and mentioned that the Germans, particularly Adenauer, were opposed to it. The American Ambassador to the German Federal Republic, David K. E. Bruce, said that he believed that the Chancellor, under the pressure of German public opinion, would eventually agree to a proposal for negotiations.

The subsequent discussions dealt primarily with presumable Soviet intentions and the credibility of Allied firmness and determination in the face of a challenge. Dulles said that he was convinced that the Soviet Union did not want general war and would not consciously get into one but that he felt that the problem was to make the issue clear-cut. Bruce made the point that unless the United States took a firm position the Allies would not even adopt a comparatively firm one; he referred to the British inclination to temporize and to accept a de facto recognition of the GDR as well as the "semi-permanent" division of Germany. Livingston T. Merchant, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, remarked that if the British and French refused to go along with American proposals for using force the United States might be faced with the decision whether "to go it alone"; if such a decision were taken, the sooner the Russians were told about it the less would be the possibility of incidents. General Lauris Norstad, United States

⁴²Memorandum USDEL/MC/2 by Assistant Secretary of State Merchant of conversation between Dulles and Spaak, Dec. 13, 1958, secret. Von Brentano told Merchant, however, that a NATO communiqué would represent the lowest common denominator of the views of the various NATO members; memorandum USDEL/MC/5 by Tyler (Embassy Bonn) of conversation between United States and German officials, Dec. 14, 1958, secret.

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[Commander in Chief, Europe, suggested that if the United States took a strong position it should simultaneously propose a conference, not only in order to give the Soviet Union a way out but also to make it easier for the British and French to adopt a firm stand.

The discussion then turned to the actual form which a challenge to allied rights might take and to the proper moment for resorting to force. Dulles believed that there would not be a "clear blockage" of Western rights but rather a slow process of strangulation. General Twining proposed, to quote from the record of conversation, that the United States should "ignore the fear of general war", which "is coming anyway", and "force the issue on a point we think is right and stand on it."]

(S1)
(a5)

Toward the end of the meeting Dulles practically summed up the issue when he declared that nobody doubted that if the West gave way it would be a disaster and that the same threat would have to be faced later under even worse conditions. But, he said, while everybody knew what the problem was, grappling with it in specific terms was difficult.⁴³

2. Paris Foreign Ministers Meetings of December 14

Tripartite Meeting. The Foreign Ministers of France, the United Kingdom, and the United States met in Paris on December 14, at first without the German representative. A quadripartite meeting with German participation was to follow immediately.

[Secretary Dulles said that it would be useful for the three Foreign Ministers to consider the revision of existing contingency plans for access to Berlin at an early stage, before the arrival of the Germans. He explained that the American proposals which had been handed to the British and French on December 11 had been approved at the highest level of government and that what was involved was a revision of instructions for Allied personnel on military trains and on the Autobahn. The change, Dulles said, should be made now,]

(S1)
(a5)
(a5)

⁴³Memorandum USDEL/MC/7 by Hillenbrand (EUR) of meeting of the United States Delegation to the NATO Ministerial Meeting, Dec. 13, 1958, secret.

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[before the replies to the Soviet note were sent and without waiting for the expiration of the six-month period during which, according to the Soviet note, there were to be no changes. In his explanations Dulles officially buried the "agency theory" which he had propounded publicly only a short while before. The Secretary declared that if GDR officials should suddenly appear at the check points "our people would operate on the basis of an agency theory which is no longer valid" (i.e., because the "principal", the USSR, and the "agent", the GDR, had denied that such a relationship existed.)⁴⁴

(b1)
(25)

Couve de Murville and Lloyd indicated agreement with part of the revisions proposed by the United States, but they had considerable reservations regarding Paragraph D on the use of military force to maintain surface access. Lloyd, supported by Couve, declared that this matter involved a "completely different range of discussion" and should be considered separately. Dulles explained that these proposals contemplated a show of force to test whether there would be resistance by force,] but he agreed to having this point reserved for further consideration. Dulles accepted the suggestions by his colleagues with respect to two other points of the American proposals of December 11: it was agreed that the contemplated Allied démarche in Moscow would be taken care of by the replies to the Soviet note and that the question of air access to Berlin would be taken up on a later occasion. The Secretary made the point that agreement had been reached that Allied officials would be instructed to turn back instead of accepting GDR processing at check points.]

(b1)
(25)

The three Foreign Ministers also discussed the possible contents of a communiqué which would be issued after the subsequent quadripartite Foreign Ministers meeting. Dulles felt that the communiqué should say that the four Foreign Ministers, after an exchange of views, had found the Soviet note unacceptable in form and substance and that their views, which were in harmony, would be placed before the NATO Council, after which a more detailed declaration would be made.⁴⁵ As

⁴⁴Ante, p. 9.

⁴⁵From Paris tel. SECTO 10, Dec. 15, 1958, secret.

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a result of the agreement of the three Foreign Ministers on parts of the proposals for revised contingency plans, appropriate instructions were sent to the American Embassy in Bonn on December 15.⁴⁶

Quadripartite Meeting. The quadripartite meeting which immediately followed the tripartite Foreign Ministers meeting dealt essentially with three matters: the communiqué to be issued after the meeting of the four Foreign Ministers, a NATO communiqué or declaration to be proposed by the four Foreign Ministers at the NATO Ministerial Meeting, and the substance and timing of the Western replies to the Soviet note of November 27. Before the substantive discussions got under way, Brentano and Dulles delivered severe indictments of the Soviet action on political, legal, and moral grounds. Mayor Willy Brandt, who attended the meeting briefly to convey to the Foreign Ministers the feelings of the people of West Berlin, pointed to the elections to the Berlin City Assembly on December 7 in which the Communists (SED) had received no more than 1.9 per cent of the votes cast.

The four Foreign Ministers quickly gave the finishing touch to the communiqué on their meeting. In this communiqué, which was based on a draft provided by the Germans, they reaffirmed the determination of their governments to maintain their position and rights with respect to Berlin, "including the right of free access", and they found "unacceptable" a unilateral repudiation by the Soviet Union of its obligations to the three Governments "in relation to their presence in Berlin and the freedom of access to that city" or the substitution of the Soviet Zone authorities for the Soviet Union "insofar as these rights are concerned." Finally, the Foreign Ministers stated in their communiqué that their governments would formulate their replies to the Soviet notes of November 27 following consultation with their Allies in the NATO Council.⁴⁷

⁴⁶From Paris, tel. SECTO 11, Dec. 15, 1958, secret.

⁴⁷The agreed text of the communiqué was transmitted to the Department from Paris in tel. SECTO 6 of Dec. 14, 1958, unclassified, and was released the same day. See Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, p. 364.

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The four Foreign Ministers also quickly agreed on the NATO communiqué which they would submit to the NATO Ministerial Meeting. This text was also based on a German draft.

As for the replies to be made to the Soviet note, Dulles declared that it was by no means clear that they should contain counterproposals, as he did not consider it good practice to negotiate under threat of an ultimatum. Perhaps the first thing to do, he said, was to get the ultimatum withdrawn.

Couve de Murville, after stating that the French draft reply did not refer to counterproposals, wondered whether the Soviet note should be regarded as an ultimatum. He declared that he would hesitate to qualify it as such in the Western replies. He would prefer asking the Soviet Union if it had intended to issue an ultimatum and to tell it that if such were the case this would not be acceptable. Dulles and Lloyd concurred, and the Secretary remarked that it was important to leave the Soviets a way out.

The four Foreign Ministers accepted a recommendation, made by the quadripartite working group which had met on December 13, that those parts of the Soviet note which contained specific proposals ought to be the subject of identical replies, while the replies need only be coordinated where it was a matter of refuting propaganda arguments. Also, the reply of the Federal Republic would differ in form from the other replies but would be the same in substance. With regard to timing, Lloyd alone was opposed to moving fast while the other Foreign Ministers favored getting out the reply as rapidly as possible. Accordingly, it was agreed that a quadripartite working group would begin work on a reply as soon as possible.⁴⁸

3. Dulles-De Gaulle Meeting, December 15

On December 15 Secretary Dulles discussed the Berlin problem with General de Gaulle in the course of a lengthy conversation on Franco-American relations and France's role in the Western alliance. General de Gaulle declared at the outset that the position taken with respect to Berlin by the three Foreign Ministers with the subsequent concurrence of Brentano

⁴⁸From Paris, tel. SECTO 9, Dec. 15, 1958, secret.

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appeared quite satisfactory to him. De Gaulle added that the principle to be followed was that the West should never retreat in the face of a menace.

Dulles expressed agreement with De Gaulle and stated that a Soviet success in Berlin would be the beginning of a most serious development. While he thought that the declaration adopted by the four Foreign Ministers the previous day was a good one, he had to point out that Britain and France had not yet given consideration to an American proposal that the Western Powers should put on a show of force to test the reaction of GDR personnel attempting to interfere with Western communications. De Gaulle stated that he would examine these proposals and emphasized that if the Soviet Union threatened war the West should accept that challenge even if it meant war.]

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The Secretary stated his conviction that the Soviet Union did not want war but would keep probing. It was therefore essential, he said, for the Western Powers to show firmness and always be prepared for the ultimate. In this connection Dulles referred to a conversation he had had earlier that day with General Norstad about certain measures that might be taken with regard to Berlin, the significance of which would be understood by the Soviet Union even if they fell short of an alert. Norstad had indicated that there were some small measures which he could take, and the Secretary hoped that the French Government would cooperate if General Norstad should recommend such measures.⁴⁹

It had to be expected that de Gaulle would relate the Berlin crisis to his fundamental criticism of the structure of the Western alliance, which he had put forward in his proposal of September 17, 1958, for a tripartite directorate within NATO. Accordingly, he declared that the Berlin situation had shown some of the flaws in the functioning of the alliance. De Gaulle

⁴⁹ Norstad had suggested that the United States could increase the number of its fighter aircraft on the continent, and in Germany especially, and that the British and French might be encouraged to take similar action.] Memorandum USDEL/MC/8 by Greene (S) of conversation between Dulles and Norstad, Dec. 15, 1958, top secret.

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assured the Secretary, however, that French concern over this state of affairs did not affect Franco-American solidarity, particularly on the Berlin issue.⁵⁰

4. NATO Ministerial Meeting, December 16

Couve de Murville's Presentation and Basic Allied Attitudes.
The NATO Ministerial Meeting opened on December 16 with the Berlin problem as first point of the agenda. Couve de Murville reported on the meeting of the four Foreign Ministers. He emphasized that that meeting had involved an exchange of views between the Federal Republic and the three Powers responsible for Berlin, and that no decisions had been taken. Stressing the need to consider public opinion in drafting the replies to the Soviet Union, the French Foreign Minister enumerated the main themes which these replies should contain: the proposal of a "free city" of West Berlin was unacceptable as was the unilateral abrogation of Western rights in the City; Berlin was not an isolated question but part of the German problem as a whole; the Western Governments had never refused to negotiate on the subject of Germany and were still prepared to do so; while the Western Governments were absolutely firm on principles, they were willing to conduct negotiations with the Soviet Union, provided the threat of an ultimatum was excluded. Finally, Couve de Murville informed the meeting of the quadripartite proposals regarding the form and timing of the replies.

The two main points in Couve de Murville's presentation, namely, that the West would stand firm on its principles but that it was ready to negotiate with the Soviet Union on Berlin and Germany, provided the ultimatum was withdrawn, were taken up by all the NATO Foreign Ministers in the discussion, albeit with some differences in emphasis. The United States and the Federal Republic stressed the need for firmness and resistance to the Soviet threat, while Italy, Canada, and Great Britain put into the foreground the need for "flexibility," for constructive proposals, and, above all, for the support of world public opinion.

⁵⁰Memorandum USDEL/MC/15 by McBride of conversation between Dulles, de Gaulle, and others, Dec. 15, 1958, secret.

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German and American Positions. Brentano called the Soviet proposal for a free city under existing conditions a piece of "monstrous cynicism" as such a free city would live under a sword of Damocles. He warned that whoever agreed to negotiate with the Soviet Union under the pressure of an ultimatum would not only lose out in the negotiations but would lose his liberty as well. There was not much room for negotiations on Berlin, and the only solution of the problem was to make the city the capital of a free and united Germany. Until this was achieved, however, the only acceptable situation was the preservation of the status quo guaranteed by the presence of Western troops. The West German Foreign Minister conceded that it would be imprudent to push the Soviet Union into taking rash actions. But the latter must not be permitted to dictate the terms of the negotiations, and only from resistance to threats, blackmail, and ultimatums would constructive negotiations result. Brentano urged the NATO members to follow such a policy and to adopt as their own the quadripartite declaration of December 14.

Secretary Dulles stated at the outset that for the first time in nearly a decade NATO was faced with a grave threat in Europe. In considering how to deal with this threat, account ought to be taken of Khrushchev's personality. Dulles described Khrushchev as "impulsive", with "elements of a gambler" and characteristics of some figures of the past who were carried away by their initial successes until they brought disaster to the world. It was therefore essential that Khrushchev be denied even partial success because this might culminate in disaster for all.

In attacking the historical, legal, and political arguments of the Soviet note, Dulles emphasized in particular that the agreements of 1944 and 1945 regarding the zones of occupation in Germany, which the Soviet Union now declared null and void, had been greatly to the interest of the latter at the time they were entered into. The Secretary reminded his listeners that under these agreements the British and American forces had turned over to the Soviet Union thousands of square miles of territory in return for receiving "a few square miles of what was then rubble in the destroyed city of Berlin." To enhance the effectiveness of his presentation, Dulles used a large map showing the large area of Central Germany which was involved. Proceeding with his argument, he stressed that the Soviet Union, in denouncing these agreements as null and void, did not propose

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to "disgorge the advantages which it [had] obtained under these agreements". Yet the Soviet Union, he said, now suggested that the Western Allies should surrender what little they had obtained in this territorial exchange.

After presenting these arguments, Dulles declared that the West was faced with something that could be interpreted as an ultimatum. He felt that it would be "almost grotesque" to suggest that new agreements could be negotiated on the "wreckage" of previous agreements that had been denounced unilaterally. The Soviet Union therefore should be given an opportunity "to qualify its reported denunciation of these agreements" and the "apparent ultimatum aspect" of its note as a preliminary condition for new agreements. The matter did not need to be put in a way to make it difficult for the Soviet Union, but willingness to continue negotiations should be related to an explanation by the Soviet Union that it did not intend to denounce existing agreements or place the Western Powers under the threat of an ultimatum.

The Secretary warned that, before the issues would be resolved, the West would be subjected to a severe war of nerves, and he referred in this connection to a recent Soviet note which had contained the threat that all of Europe could be wiped out by the Soviet Union.⁵¹ The Soviet Union knew, however, that it was equally true that the United States could destroy the Soviet Union, and therefore it was not necessary to worry about these threats. Dulles declared that the deterrent power of the United States was greater than at any time in the past and that American military advisers were confident that the Soviet Union would not risk war over Berlin. Accordingly, the Soviet threat to devastate Europe if the West stood firm on Berlin was an empty one "which ought not to frighten anyone". The West could proceed with confidence and avoid "giving an appearance of success" to a "reckless and irresponsible move." In this connection Dulles drew a parallel with Hitler to make the point that the aggressor must not be allowed to have initial success but must be discouraged from the outset.

Italian, Canadian, and British Positions. If Brentano and Dulles emphasized rather the element of firmness in the Western

⁵¹Note Nr. 90/OSA of Dec. 13, 1958, transmitted in tel. 1262 from Moscow (223 to Paris), Dec. 13, official use only.

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position, other speakers placed the stress on Western willingness to engage in meaningful negotiations. Italian Foreign Minister Fanfani, while expressing agreement with Couve's report and the Four-Power communiqué, declared that an appropriate answer to the Soviet note would combat the propaganda theme that the Soviet initiative was a contribution to peace. He urged that the replies contain proposals for negotiations.

Sidney Smith, Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, agreed that the only satisfactory solution for Berlin was to make it the capital of a free and united Germany, and he called the Soviet move an attempt to undermine "one of the few working models of practicable coexistence", an attempt "disturbing in its recklessness." Nevertheless, he wondered whether the possibility of "some interim arrangement" which could be the first step to reunification should be ruled out entirely and whether there were any counterproposals on Berlin which might be advanced by the Western Powers. At some point negotiations with the USSR on the problems of Germany and European security would become necessary, and he hoped that a move in that direction could be foreshadowed in the NATO communiqué. Smith stated that he did not have any formula to suggest but that he felt the Western Powers should begin reevaluating their policies regarding German reunification and explore whether there were "any alternative roads to the goal of German reunification." He expressed hope that a tolerable "modus vivendi" with the Soviet Union could be found in Europe and declared that the Allies must preserve flexibility in order to regain the initiative over the Berlin issue.

British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd expressed full agreement with Dulles that concessions would not make the West safer and welcomed the statement that the full force of the nuclear deterrent would be used if the Soviet Union attempted to change the status quo by force. Lloyd also said that he was pleased that the NATO representatives were united in their rejection of the Soviet proposal for a "free city" of West Berlin. The British Foreign Secretary emphasized, nevertheless, that this firm rejection of the Soviet proposal must be combined with a "constructive approach to the German problem as a whole." Public opinion in the West in particular must become convinced that "we have a constructive approach to that problem", namely, that Berlin should be the "capital of a free and united Germany" and that the Western proposals for German reunification offer "a sound basis for European security." Lloyd suggested also

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that these proposals should be reexamined with a view to improving the way of presenting them, because the proposals were somewhat old and people were "a little tired of them." The British Foreign Secretary stressed again that the West must be "absolutely firm on the principle but flexible in tactics" and pointed to the fact that Soviet rejection of a pledged word and unilateral Soviet repudiation of agreements gave the West a strong point in the field of public relations. Lloyd felt that the Western Powers should strongly emphasize this Soviet conduct and its implication for negotiations for future agreements and that by developing this theme "more in sorrow than in anger" they would make an impact on public opinion and perhaps influence even Khrushchev himself.

NATO Communiqué, December 16. In the communiqué issued after the debate on Berlin, the NATO Council declared that no state had the right to withdraw unilaterally from international agreements and it stated that Soviet denunciation of the inter-allied agreements on Berlin did not deprive the other parties of their rights or relieve the Soviet Union of its obligations. The Council "fully" associated itself with the statement issued by the Four Governments on December 14; it declared that the Soviet demands had created a "serious situation"; and it recalled the obligations of its member states with regard to the "security and welfare" of Berlin and the "maintenance of the position of the three Powers" there. The Council declared that the NATO members could not approve a Berlin solution which jeopardized the right of the three Powers to remain in Berlin "as long as their responsibilities require it" and which did not assure "freedom of communication between that city and the free world." The Council declared that the Soviet Union would be responsible for any action which resulted in hampering or endangering this freedom of communication. Finally, the NATO Council said that the Berlin question "can only be settled in the framework of an agreement with the USSR on Germany as a whole"; it recalled that the Western Powers had repeatedly expressed their readiness "to examine this problem as well as those of European security and disarmament"; and it stated that they were still ready to do so.⁵²

⁵²Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Dec. 16, 1958, Verbatim Record C-VR (58) 61, Dec. 16, 1958, NATO secret; from Paris, tels. POLTO 1717 and POLTO 1718, Dec. 17, 1958, both secret; for a published text of the NATO Council communiqué, see Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 364-365.

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5. Final Conversations and Statements by Secretary Dulles in Paris, December 17-18

On December 17 Secretary Dulles held separate conversations with the Foreign Ministers of France and Britain in which he discussed the implications of the use of military force in connection with contingency planning, especially in the light of the views expressed by the British and French Foreign Ministers in the tripartite meeting of December 14. To the suggestion made by Lloyd that a test of Soviet intentions should be made in the air corridors rather than on the ground, Dulles replied that it was the United States position that the Allies should make a show of force on the ground. To Couve de Murville Dulles explained that the purpose of the relevant part of the proposed contingency plans was to make a show of force in order to test Soviet willingness to meet force with force. If the Soviet Union should respond with force, the Allies would then consult regarding the next steps. The important thing, he said, was to maneuver the Soviets into a position where they would have to commit the first aggression. Enlarging upon his statement in the NATO Ministerial Meeting that the Soviet Union did not wish war, Dulles explained that that nation was in a period of relative weakness, namely, between the bomber phase and the missile phase. Therefore, if the Allies made a show of force they would probably get through. Agreement was finally reached with both Foreign Ministers that tripartite discussions on those parts of the contingency plans which pertained to the use of force would be held in Washington.⁵³

At a final background news conference in Paris, Secretary Dulles professed to be "very well satisfied" with the communiqué by the four Foreign Ministers, "in a sense the most important act was taken here", and with the unanimous action of the NATO Council supporting it.⁵⁴ These statements, Dulles said, would

⁵³From Paris, tel. SECTO 17, Dec. 17, 1958, and tel. SECTO 18, Dec. 17, both secret; memorandum USDEL/MC/20 by McBride of conversation between Dulles, Couve de Murville, and others, Dec. 17, 1958, confidential.

⁵⁴At the close of the Ministerial Meeting on Dec. 18 a final communiqué once more affirmed the "unanimous view of Berlin" expressed in the NATO declaration of Dec. 16; from Paris, tel. POLTO 1758, Dec. 18, 1958, unclassified; for published text, see Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 365-367.

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go a long way "to dissipate the risk of miscalculation" which always was the factor "most apt to lead to war."⁵⁵

E. Western Notes in Reply to the Soviet Union, December 31

As agreed at the meetings in Paris, the Western Powers coordinated in Paris the drafting of their replies to the Soviet Union; this coordination included a discussion of the drafts in the NATO Council. Afterwards the Department informed Embassy Moscow that, while the final versions of the replies were not identical in all respects, "coordination of operative language" had been effected "to the maximum extent possible." The notes of the three Western Powers were handed to the Soviet Foreign Ministry on December 31, while the reply of the Federal Republic was presented on January 5, 1959.⁵⁶

In its reply the United States first rejected the historical and legal arguments of the Soviet note of November 27 and refused to accept a unilateral denunciation of the accords of 1944 and 1945 or to relieve the Soviet Government of the obligations which it had assumed in June 1949. The United States, furthermore, reaffirmed the responsibility of the three Western Powers for the freedom of West Berlin and stated that the "rights of the three Powers to remain in Berlin with unhindered communications by surface and air between that city and the Federal Republic of Germany" were "essential" to the discharge of that responsibility. Therefore the proposal for a "so-called 'free city' for West Berlin" was unacceptable.

The United States recalled its earlier note to the Soviet Union of September 30, 1958 in which it had expressed its

⁵⁵From Paris, tel. POLTO 1760, Dec. 19, 1958, official use only.

⁵⁶From Paris, tel. SECTO 21, Dec. 17, 1958, confidential, and tels. 2299, 2300, and 2301, Dec. 20, secret; to Bonn, tel. 1309, Dec. 21, and tel. 1313, Dec. 22, both secret; from London, tel. 3320, Dec. 23, secret; from Bonn, tel. 1344, Dec. 23, confidential; from Paris, tels. POLTO 1803, Dec. 23; 2341, Dec. 23; POLTO 1819, POLTO 1820, POLTO 1821, secret; to Paris, tel. TOPOL 2147, Dec. 29, secret; to Moscow, tel. 1011, Dec. 30, secret.

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willingness to enter into discussions with the Soviet Government on the basis of Western proposals "for free all-German elections and free decisions for an all-German Government" or any other proposals insuring the "reunification of Germany in freedom."⁵⁷ The United States pointed out, however, that "public repudiation of solemn agreements", coupled with an "ultimatum threatening unilateral action" unless it be acquiesced in within six months, would not afford a "reasonable basis for negotiations between sovereign states" and that it could not discuss issues with the Soviet Union "under menace of ultimatum." The United States therefore assumed that this was not the purpose of the Soviet note and that the Soviet Union was ready to enter into discussions "in an atmosphere devoid of coercion and threats." Finally, the United States inquired whether the Soviet Union was ready to enter into discussions "between the Four Powers concerned" and declared that in that event it would be the object of the United States Government "to discuss the question of Berlin in the wider framework of negotiations for a solution of the German problem as well as that of European security."⁵⁸

⁵⁷Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 336-338.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 378-381.

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CHAPTER II

PREPARATIONS FOR A CONFERENCE WITH THE SOVIET UNION, JANUARY-APRIL 1959

A. New Soviet Moves, January 1959

While the Western Foreign Ministers were still meeting in Paris it was reported from Moscow that Anastas Mikoyan, Deputy Premier of the USSR, was planning to come to the United States early in January 1959. Although the purpose of the visit was ostensibly a discussion of Soviet-American trade problems, there was no doubt that the visit of one of Khrushchev's closest collaborators at this particular moment was, as the three Western Foreign Ministers agreed, a "most interesting development."⁵⁹ Mikoyan's visit to the United States was one new element in the diplomatic story of the Berlin problem as the new year 1959 opened. Another one was the Soviet reaction to the Western notes of December 31 as expressed in the Soviet note of January 10, 1959 transmitting a draft peace treaty for Germany.

1. The Mikoyan Visit to the United States

During his visit to the United States Mikoyan had a number of conversations with American officials which dealt with the whole range of Soviet-American relations as well as with problems of mutual trade in particular. The only significant discussion on the subjects of Berlin and Germany took place during Mikoyan's first meeting with Secretary Dulles on January 5, although these subjects were brought up also in Mikoyan's subsequent meetings with Dulles on January 16 and with President Eisenhower on January 17.

After Mikoyan had made clear in his first conversation that he had not come to conduct negotiations but merely to exchange views, he concentrated on the by now familiar Soviet demand for the speedy conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany,

⁵⁹From Paris, tel. SECTO 25, Dec. 18, 1958, confidential.

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declaring that a peace treaty was feasible without prior reunification even though the latter might be preferable. Mikoyan called the demand for full German unity unrealistic and contrasted it with unity on the basis of confederation, which he said was realistic because on that basis different social systems could continue to exist in both German states even though there would be certain common functions exercised by the confederation. The Soviet leader announced that the Soviet Union had been preparing the draft of a German peace treaty and that, while it would be glad to have proposals or amendments from the United States concerning this draft, it would move ahead in any event and would be very persistent on this subject. Mikoyan emphasized that the provisions of the draft were normal and acceptable and that there was nothing communistic about it, and he said that he would leave with the Secretary an aide-mémoire outlining the contents of the draft treaty.⁶⁰ He stressed particularly that the withdrawal of foreign troops from Germany within a short time was a very important issue. If the United States was not prepared to go along with this, the Soviet Union would seek alternate solutions, such as withdrawal of one-third of all foreign troops six months after the conclusion of a peace treaty with the question of a full withdrawal being left for the future.

Mikoyan said, referring to the note sent by the United States on December 31, that the United States either did not understand the Soviet position or that it chose to distort it for the benefit of Adenauer. He then expounded anew the Soviet position on Berlin as laid down in the note of November 27 but added one feature, namely, a proposal for the establishment of a permanent commission composed of representatives of the United States, the USSR, and others "to guarantee non-interference in the affairs of Berlin."

The most important feature of this conversation was Mikoyan's denial that the Soviet proposal was an ultimatum or a threat. He emphasized that the Soviet Union had not threatened military

⁶⁰This Soviet aide-mémoire of Jan. 5, 1959, briefly setting forth the Soviet Government's views on a peace treaty with Germany and on the Berlin problem, is on the lines of Mikoyan's statements to Dulles and of the Soviet notes of Nov. 27, 1958 and Jan. 10, 1959 (post, p. 40).

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action of any sort, that it did not want war, and that it did not believe that the United States wanted war. The United States, he said, had never even indicated how long the occupation of Berlin would last, and the fact that the Soviet Union had mentioned a six months' period, which was long enough for any negotiation, did not mean that this was an ultimatum or threat.

Dulles stated that he was very glad to have Mikoyan's assurance that the Soviet note was not designed as a threat or ultimatum; otherwise any negotiation would be impossible. He made it clear, however, that the United States was entitled to maintain certain forces in Berlin and that it would not accept any unilateral determination regarding any withdrawal of forces. Referring to the offer by the United States to renew discussions on the German question, the Secretary said that if agreement on the problem of Germany as a whole were possible the question of Berlin would appear in a different perspective. Yet no isolated withdrawal of American forces would occur. The United States did not want war over Berlin, but neither was it prepared to avoid war by retreating under pressure.⁶¹

The second round of talks with Mikoyan, which took place after he had visited various parts of the United States, did not indicate any changes in the positions of either side. At the close of a long discussion over the whole range of Soviet-American relations, Dulles stressed as his final point that he did not want to leave Mikoyan under any doubt that the United States would not acquiesce in any Soviet turnover of responsibilities to the GDR. When Mikoyan declared that the Soviet Union would have to carry through the announced turnover of responsibility if its "free city" proposal did not lead anywhere, Dulles replied that in this case the United States would have to follow through with its intentions. In the meeting with President Eisenhower Mikoyan complained that there had not been an exchange of views on Berlin with the Soviet Union and that the United States had taken a purely negative line. The President replied by referring to the wartime agreements and to the pullback of the forces under his command to the agreed line in Germany, and he emphasized, to quote the memorandum of the

⁶¹Memorandum by Freers (EUR) of conversation between Dulles, Mikoyan, and others, Jan. 5, 1959, secret.

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signed, its representatives would sign the treaty along with those of the two German states.⁶⁴

Although the Soviet Union still insisted on a solution of the Berlin problem in accordance with its proposals of November 27 and again affirmed its right of "divesting itself of the functions being carried out in relation to Berlin", it proposed to discuss the question of Berlin with the Western Powers. Moreover, the Soviet Union declared that if the Western Powers considered it expedient "before the calling of a peace conference preliminarily to exchange opinions with the Soviet Union about the content of a peace treaty, then the Soviet Government will be agreeable to that." In this case, however, it would be "essential to insure the appropriate participation of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany.

With regard to the problem of European security, the Soviet Union stated that it attached "tremendous importance to its solution" but that this problem required special discussion and could not be "mixed in with other questions, including with that of Berlin".⁶⁵

B. Early Western Reactions

1. Differing German, British, and American Attitudes

The Mikoyan visit in combination with the Soviet note of January 10 was bound to affect the members of the Western alliance differently. As could be expected, the Soviet moves only deepened Adenauer's distrust of Soviet policies and strengthened his habitual uneasiness with respect to the firmness of his allies in the face of Soviet enticements.¹ In a letter of January 12 the Chancellor wrote Dulles that the Soviet

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⁶⁴The Soviet Union's emphasis on the idea of German confederation, as expressed in the note of January 10 and by Mikoyan in his conversation with Dulles, coincided with an East German propaganda campaign with the theme of confederation. The East German policy line was laid down in a speech by Ulbricht to the SED Central Committee on Jan. 18; Neues Deutschland, Jan. 18, 1959; FBIS, East Germany, Jan. 19.

⁶⁵Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 381-401.

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attitude, as indicated by the Mikoyan aide-mémoire and the note of January 10, was not in the least accomodating and that the proposals were "plainly provocative." [Adenauer went so far as to suggest that Mikoyan should not be received by President Eisenhower] and at the same time announced that he was sending Under State Secretary Dittmann of the Federal Foreign Office to Washington so that he, together with Grewe, could present the position of the Federal Republic to Dulles. (When Dittmann, accompanied by Grewe, called on Dulles on January 14, he withdrew [Adenauer's request that Mikoyan not be received by President Eisenhower; Dittmann explained that the Chancellor had not known that arrangements for Mikoyan's White House visit had already been made.⁶⁶ Adenauer also expressed to Ambassador Bruce his misgivings over the Mikoyan visit and the "outrageous" Soviet draft treaty and warned that one must not "succumb to Soviet blandishments."⁶⁷]

Markedly different from Adenauer's reaction to the latest Soviet moves were those which the British Government expressed in an aide-mémoire of January 13. The British conceded that the Soviet proposals for a German draft treaty hardly varied from earlier proposals and even were "if anything slightly worse from the Western point of view." The most important fact, however, in the British view, was that "the Russians do want to negotiate" and that there were indications of "flexibility" in the Soviet note. The Soviet Union seemed to be willing to discuss the possibility of an interim Berlin solution while the proposed negotiations for a peace treaty were going on. The British suggested that the Western Powers should find out what the "preliminary exchanges of opinion" cited in the Soviet note would be about, so as to get a discussion going which would [enable both sides "to get off the Berlin hook"] and to establish some kind of "continuing conference machinery" to deal with the German question. Through a preliminary exchange of views concerning an interim solution for Berlin, the Soviet Union might be maneuvered into the direction "into which they evidently want to be maneuvered, i.e., a meeting about Germany in the spring".

⁶⁶Memorandum by Hillenbrand (EUR) of conversation among Dulles, Dittmann, Grewe, and others, Jan. 14, 1959, secret.

⁶⁷Letter, Adenauer to Dulles, Jan. 12, 1959, no classification indicated; from Bonn, tel. 1467, Jan. 13, confidential.

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While emphasizing that there must be no weakening of the Allies' determination to preserve their rights in Berlin, the British felt that Allied firmness had already "produced a gleam of light".⁶⁸

Washington, for its part took a position between those of Bonn and London by expressing a willingness to embark on negotiations without expecting easy or early solutions. Making use of the clarification which he had obtained from Mikoyan, Secretary Dulles emphasized at his press conference of January 13 that the Soviets did not intend "to have their note treated as an ultimatum with a fixed time limit" even though there had been no change in the basic Soviet position on Berlin. With reference to the Western proposal for negotiations on German reunification, Berlin, and European security, in contrast to the Soviet offer to negotiate on Berlin and a German peace treaty but not on German reunification, Dulles declared that, although there was a sharp difference of opinion "as to what we talk about", there was a common denominator in terms of a feeling "that there should be discussions." In short, the question had got down to a point where it was "a matter of agenda."

At this news conference Dulles also stated that, while free elections were the "natural method" and the "agreed formula" for reunifying Germany, they were "not the only method." Dulles refused to speculate, however, as to what other methods would be acceptable and expressed the belief that no one method should be regarded as an absolutely exclusive one.⁶⁹

West German Under State Secretary Dittmann, during his conversation with Dulles on the next day, expressed concern over these statements by Dulles which, he said, might be interpreted as support for the idea of confederation and thus endanger the position of the Government of the Federal Republic. Dulles explained that reunification might also be forced by an East German revolt and that the West had no desire to allay the Soviet

⁶⁸Aide-mémoire from the British Embassy, Jan. 13, 1959, secret.

⁶⁹Department of State press release 28, Jan. 13, 1959.

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[Union's fears in this respect.] However, the Secretary agreed to Grewe's stating to the press on the basis of their meeting that United States policy on free elections had been confirmed.⁷⁰

2. Dulles-Adenauer Exchange, January 29-30

As the United States moved closer toward negotiations with the Soviet Union, Dulles sent a lengthy letter to Chancellor Adenauer to explain the American position. In this letter, which went forward on January 29, he tried to assure and persuade Adenauer of the correctness of the course on which the United States was about to embark.

Dulles first stated that the Mikoyan visit had not changed the Berlin situation, in spite of Mikoyan's denial that there had been an ultimatum, and that the West still had to expect that the Soviet Union would turn over its responsibilities in Berlin to the Pankow regime on May 27. The Secretary believed, however, that "the Soviets have been taken somewhat aback by the firmness and unity of purpose on Berlin" displayed at the NATO meeting in December. But even though Mikoyan must have returned to Moscow without any illusions about the determination and "general fiber" of the United States, the "time of testing" for the West lay still ahead. Western unity and firmness were the "indispensable prerequisites" for dispelling the crisis over Berlin.

After offering these words of reassurance, Dulles pointed to the tactical difficulties facing the West in negotiations with the Soviet Union. Dulles felt that the Western Powers should seek "a form of presentation more persuasive than our Geneva efforts of 1955." He felt that ^{the} Western Powers had to realize that the Soviet Union, "by pressing on the West's militarily exposed nerve in Berlin", had raised in an urgent form "the closely related more general problems of a European settlement." He doubted that the Soviet Union was ready yet for a general settlement "on terms the West can accept" but was convinced that another effort in this direction had to be made "as part of the process of dealing with the Berlin situation." This, of course, meant "moving toward a conference with the Soviets."

⁷⁰The text of Grewe's statement was transmitted to Bonn in tel. 1492, Jan. 14, 1959, unclassified.

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Well aware of Adenauer's grave doubts and apprehensions in this matter, Dulles stressed that a conference, first of all, would enable Khrushchev to withdraw from the dangerous position which he had taken with respect to Berlin. It was unlikely that the Soviet Union would postpone its announced plans for Berlin unless it was provided "with some such face-saving camouflage." If, on the other hand, the Soviet Union did not withdraw from its position, the conference would demonstrate to the people of the Western countries "how faithfully we sought a peaceful solution before facing the grave risk of a resort to force to maintain our position in Berlin." Referring to a remark made by Mikoyan that the Soviet bloc would sign a peace treaty with the Pankow regime unless there was some discussion with the West, Dulles emphasized "that we can not merely reject the Soviet proposal and expect them to come up with a more acceptable one." Such a course of action would not be "either realistic or tactically sound."

Under these conditions a flexible agenda for a conference with the Soviet Union would be to the advantage of the Western Powers. Thus, they might suggest a Foreign Ministers conference at Geneva in mid-April to discuss "the question of Germany." As for the practical preparations, Dulles stated that there had been general willingness to arrange for an early meeting of a four-power working group in Washington "to serve as a focal point for an exchange of views on both tactics and substance." Its first task would be the preparation of a draft reply to the Soviet note of January 10 which would be essentially confined to matters of procedure. The Foreign Offices of Germany, Britain, and France had already agreed that such a meeting should be held in Washington at the beginning of February, and it was hoped that at such a meeting a reply to the Soviet Union could be drafted to go forward before the middle of February.

Finally, with respect to the substance of the Western position, Dulles used the argument that the West would have much to gain if it could take advantage of the "great asset" which the Federal Republic possessed in the attraction of Western political ideals for the overwhelming majority of the population of the Soviet Zone. The United States had urged the Germans to give some thought to this problem and was attempting itself "to come up with some ideas".⁷¹

⁷¹Letter, Dulles to Adenauer, sent in tel. 1646 to Bonn, Jan. 29, 1959, secret.

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When Adenauer received the Secretary's letter, he had just written him a letter transmitting a lengthy memorandum containing his ideas "on the present political situation in the world." In this memorandum Adenauer declared that it was wrong to judge the current situation only under the aspect of the partition of Germany "as is done in Britain and particularly in the United States." The partition of Germany was not the cause but the consequence of the tension between the United States and the Soviet Union. The effect of characterizing the partition of Germany as the most dangerous factor in the current situation was to deflect attention from the real threat, namely, "the expansive urge of the Soviet Union". Adenauer conceded that there would have to be negotiations in the course of which consideration might be given to the establishment of diplomatic relations by the Federal Republic with Poland and Czechoslovakia, provided the Berlin question was "solved properly", and to the issuing of a "carefully formulated statement" concerning the Oder-Neisse line containing such points as the renunciation of the use of force, the right of people to their homeland, and economic cooperation. The Chancellor also suggested that an agreement might be negotiated regarding the maintenance of the status quo in Berlin for a certain period and that it might also be considered "whether the United Nations could be brought into this matter, and if so, how."

(b1)
(a2)
(a5)

Finally, Adenauer declared that the principal aim of negotiations with the Soviet Union ought to be to deal with the problem of controlled disarmament in the fields of nuclear and conventional weapons. Should the Soviet Union reject or sabotage such disarmament negotiations, the whole world would see "which side does not want world peace." While this would be regrettable, it would also represent a great success for purposes of propaganda against the Soviet Union.⁷²

C. The Secretary's Trip to London, Paris, and Bonn,
February 4-8, 1959

Dulles had decided, before sending his letter of January 29 to Adenauer, that he would try to promote agreement on the Western negotiating position by holding personal discussions with

⁷²Letter, Adenauer to Dulles, with attached memorandum, Jan. 30, 1959, top secret.

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the leaders of the Western alliance. In closing the letter to Adenauer, accordingly, he had expressed his willingness to visit the Chancellor in Bonn the following week in order to discuss matters with him and Brentano. The British and French Governments were notified at once of this proposal and were told that, if the trip materialized, the Secretary intended to talk also to Macmillan and Lloyd in London and to de Gaulle and Couve de Murville in Paris.⁷³ The three powers agreed to the proposed discussions; so, after a conference at the White House on February 3,⁷⁴ Dulles left for Europe.

The Secretary's trip was to prove an important milestone in the evolution of a Western negotiating position. It was also significant in developing Western plans for dealing with West Berlin access problems in the event that the Soviet Union suddenly transferred to the East Germans its responsibilities in Berlin. The Secretary's talks with the Western leaders on the latter subject will be taken up in the next chapter, which concerns contingency planning. It ought to be kept in mind also that Dulles' talks with the other Western leaders on the substance and procedure of East-West negotiations were supplemented by the concurrent efforts of the Four-Power working group in Washington which dealt with the more specific aspects of these problems.

1. London Conversations, February 4-5

Meeting with Lloyd. Dulles had his first meeting with Lloyd on February 4 in the afternoon. There was essential agreement with respect to the procedural questions of a meeting with the Soviet Union. Both favored a conference with the Soviet Union early in May, to be preceded by a Western Foreign Ministers meeting at which the substantive Western position would be formulated. Dulles declared that a conference prior to May 27 (the expiration of the six months' period stipulated in the Soviet note of November 27) would be desirable but remarked that the French were opposed to asking for such a date because they considered this to be a sign of weakness. He felt, however,

⁷³To London, tel. 6884, Jan. 29, 1959, to Paris as 2697, secret.

⁷⁴White House news release, Feb. 3, 1959, unclassified.

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that a conference prior to May 27 would give the Soviet Union a way out of its extreme Berlin position if it wanted to find one.

With regard to the substance of negotiations, Dulles felt that the Western position might be the same as that of November 1955⁷⁵ though it might be embellished to some extent. He expressed the view that the Western Powers had never been able to get across the merits of their position. The United States was prepared to accept a thinning out of forces in Germany but not the elimination of foreign forces. Since no nation currently was strong enough to protect its own security, the exclusion of foreign troops from a particular country would amount to discrimination with respect to that country. However, some formulation which would still keep some portion of the Western forces in Germany and which was broader than Germany in application, preferably broader than Poland and Czechoslovakia, might be considered. Lloyd commented that he was also opposed to any agreement on limited armament if it involved discrimination against foreign troops. But he felt that the concept of an area of a controlled limitation of armament had merit.

When Lloyd brought up the question as to whether the Germans really wanted reunification, Dulles mentioned the letter which he had just received from Adenauer and which, he said, essentially presented the argument why the Western Powers should not concentrate on reunification. Adenauer, moreover, Dulles reported, inferred that the Western Powers were under great pressure to pay too big a price for reunification because of their alleged view that it would solve all world problems. Lloyd made the comment that the Western Powers, out of loyalty to Adenauer, had been saying, somewhat tongue in cheek, that the division of Germany was the basic cause of East-West tensions. Dulles pointed out that Adenauer took the position that we should almost drop the German question and concentrate on disarmament. But in the light of two recent experiences at Geneva, Dulles said, the attempt to shift the entire attention to disarmament appeared to

⁷⁵Dulles was presumably referring to the "Western Proposal on German Reunification and European Security" presented to the Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference on Oct. 27, 1955. See Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 192-195.

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be futile. Moreover, the Western Powers could not escape from the problems with which the Soviet Union confronted them, i.e., Germany and Berlin.

There was some discussion of the idea of a possible role for the United Nations in Berlin. Dulles expressed the view, as stated in the record of the conversation, that once the Western troops left Berlin "the game would be up" and that talk about a role for the United Nations in Berlin involved resort to a "vague formula". Lloyd remarked that the United Nations aspect was essentially a move in a diplomatic game but that the idea of placing the whole of Berlin under United Nations tutelage with a guarantee of access had a certain appeal. Dulles questioned the legal basis for such a United Nations role and repeated that he could see no practical substitute for the presence of Western troops in Berlin.⁷⁶

Meetings with Macmillan. Dulles talked to Macmillan later the same day. The Prime Minister urged that the Western Powers should attempt to provide "long-term context" for their own thinking. He started from the premise that the West Germans were not as eager for reunification as current Western policy subsumed and that eventually Adenauer's successors might want to seek a deal with the Soviet Union which would destroy the basis of "our entire European policy." Therefore, the Western Powers should make sure that they got now their "money's worth". This meant that, even if the status quo in Europe might seem satisfactory to all parties concerned, the West should consider whether a "thinning out" of forces in Europe might not be advantageous, provided it did not involve discrimination against a particular country or particular forces. If the European area included in such a scheme was large enough it might eventually lead to the kind of reunification "with which we could live", especially if this would get the Red Army back into the Soviet Union. Macmillan insisted that the success of such a policy would be a major gain for the West by detaching the "Communist claws" from a significant area and would lead to important political and ideological reverberations to Moscow's disadvantage. Dulles expressed scepticism that the political and military risks involved in the Prime Minister's proposals would be acceptable; assisted by Merchant, he weighed the risks of a "thinning out"

⁷⁶From London, tel. SECTO 4, Feb. 5, 1959, secret.

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[based on the status quo and of acquiescing in the long-term division of Germany.] Dulles noted that there were no agreed conclusions on "long-term matters."⁷⁷

Agreement was reached, however, in a subsequent conference with Macmillan and Lloyd, on the timetable and preparations for the forthcoming meeting with the Soviet Union. There was to be a meeting of the four Western Foreign Ministers in Paris, followed by a visit to President Eisenhower by Macmillan shortly before the April NATO meeting. As for the date of the conference with the Soviet Union, the replies to the Soviet note of January 10 which were being drafted by the Working Group in Washington should suggest that it be left subject to agreement by all parties concerned. The Western Ambassadors in Moscow would be instructed to propose a date in late April or early May so that the conference might still be in session on the fateful day of May 27. The West would accept either Vienna or Geneva as a place for the conference. It was also agreed that the participation of the heads of government was undesirable unless the meeting promised to accomplish positive results. There was also a consensus of opinion that much work needed to be done regarding the substance of the Western position and that the Working Group would require guidance from the anticipated meeting of the Western Foreign Minister's in March.⁷⁸

Report to Eisenhower. When Dulles reported his impressions from the London conversations in a telegram to President Eisenhower, he did not hide his dissatisfaction with the British Prime Minister, who, he said, "talked in a rather rambling way about a possible program which would involve semi-permanent acceptance of the partition of Germany and then a thinning out of forces in the general Central European area." Dulles also referred to Macmillan's forthcoming visit to Russia, about which he had expressed considerable reservations to Macmillan, in somewhat sarcastic terms as "Harold's solitary pilgrimage to Moscow". Dulles stressed that he had obtained from Macmillan a promise that he would not imply in his statement to the House of Commons that the United States approved the trip. All in all, Dulles reported, Macmillan had been "vague and rambling and indecisive",

⁷⁷From London, tel. DULTE 3, Feb. 5, 1959, secret.

⁷⁸From Paris, tel. SECTO 13, Feb. 5, 1959, secret.

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and the talks with him had this time been "less satisfactory" than usual. By contrast, he expected to encounter in his meeting with de Gaulle the following day "plenty of decisiveness, although perhaps not precisely the kind which we would like."⁷⁹

(b) (AS)

2. Paris Conversations, February 6-7

Meeting with Couve de Murville. The Secretary's next stop was Paris, where his first conversation was with Foreign Minister Couve de Murville on February 6. The Secretary found himself in general agreement with the French Foreign Minister, who urged that the gravity of the issues not be underestimated and warned against popular expectations that somehow arrangements would be made and that the problems would dissolve in air. Couve saw indication of a change in the Soviet Union's announced intention to transfer its responsibilities in Berlin to the GDR.

Couve and Dulles also agreed that it would be unwise to include the subject of disarmament in the agenda of a meeting with the Soviet Union as Adenauer had suggested. The Chancellor's view that an agreement on disarmament would lead to a detente and to the subsequent solution of other problems was not realistic. Dulles commented that not much headway in the field of disarmament could be made until at least some political problems had been solved.

(b) (AS)

After Couve stated that the French as yet had no precise ideas on the substance of the Western position, Dulles again proposed, as he had done in London, that the West should start out from the 1955 proposals, which, however, needed to be polished up and given a new look. Couve declared that both sides would presumably start from previous positions, that they would presumably not change them, and that an agreement with the Soviet Union was therefore unlikely in the circumstances. In that case the Western Powers would have to find some sort of modus vivendi, and if reunification was not possible a solution ought to be found enabling the Western Powers to get through the next few years. Dulles doubted that the West would bring about German reunification at the conference and voiced uncertainty, moreover,

⁷⁹From Paris, tel. DULTE 4, Feb. 5, 1959, secret (removed from eyes only category, classified as secret only by Warren A. Henderson, S/S-S, May 4, 1965); memorandum by Dulles of private conversation with Macmillan, Feb. 5, 1959, top secret.

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that there was much eagerness for reunification despite considerable talk on the subject. He felt that even in Germany there were factors which reduced the enthusiasm for reunification. Finally, the Secretary and Couve also agreed that the Federal Republic ought to be less fearful of arrangements that would permit it to exercise influence on East Germany and that there was "no need for an inferiority complex vis-a-vis the GDR."⁸⁰

(b)
(a5)

Meeting with de Gaulle. The Secretary's conference with de Gaulle on February 6, which was also attended by Premier Michel Debré, Couve de Murville, and several top-level French advisers, went over much of the ground which the Secretary had covered first with Couve alone. There was considerable discussion of contingency planning (which will be taken up in the next chapter). For the rest, the conversation dealt mainly with the process of working out a Western negotiating position. Rather surprisingly, de Gaulle did not reject Adenauer's proposal to include disarmament in the agenda of a East-West meeting as completely as Dulles and Couve had done. De Gaulle conceded that the introduction of the subject of disarmament would cause trouble but felt that it would be necessary to touch the subject if the conference was to accomplish anything. Dulles explained that he opposed the inclusion of disarmament mainly because it would remove the conference from the special sphere of Four Power responsibility that such a conference would have to consider suggestions such as a thinning out of forces, the Rapacki plan⁸¹ for a denuclearized zone in Central Europe, or disarmament in Eastern Europe. But all of these matters were quite different from the problem of general disarmament.

(b)
(a5)

In the course of conversation, Dulles emphasized that the Western Powers had to hold a conference with the Soviet Union in order to show the world that they were reasonable even though he did not feel that the German problem could be solved at this

⁸⁰From Paris, tel. SECTO 14, Feb. 6, 1959, secret.

⁸¹This proposal had been advanced by Polish Foreign Minister Rapacki in an address to the United Nations General Assembly on Oct. 2, 1957 and had been set forth in detail in a note and memorandum of Feb. 14, 1958 to the American Ambassador in Warsaw. See Documents on Disarmament, 1945-1959 (Department of State publication 7008), pp. 889-892, 944-948.

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juncture. De Gaulle thereupon inquired whether the Secretary had any formula which went beyond merely satisfying the public and which contained the possibility of a solution to the German problem. Dulles declared that he had no such solution at this time and remarked in this connection that he was not certain as to how many people really wanted German reunification, "including the Federal Republic itself." He recalled that de Gaulle, when he met him in 1947, had not been a strong advocate of German reunification. De Gaulle admitted that this had been the case in 1947, and that it was still so, because of the situation in France and also because of the fear of a unified Germany among all the people of Eastern Europe. Dulles again criticized the Federal Republic, as he had done in London, for its lack of initiative both in establishing contacts with the GDR and in making use of its attraction for the East Germans. He felt that Bonn had acted "rather stuffily" in this matter. De Gaulle concurred, stating that he considered it possible to push ahead in matters of transportation and communications and thus bring about a closer rapprochement between East and West Germany. (S) (a)

With regard to the preparations for negotiations with the Soviet Union, de Gaulle approved the idea of a Western Foreign Ministers meeting. He urged, however, that it not be a hurried meeting but one which allowed plenty of time for deliberations, where the subjects could be examined in calmness and without pressure.⁸²

Airport Comments to Couve de Murville. In his final conversation with the French Foreign Minister at the airport on February 7, Dulles emphasized the constructive developments in the Federal Republic, its ties to France and the other Western countries in NATO, and its participation in the European Economic Community. [He declared that it would be a big mistake to jeopardize all this in order to "buy reunification."]⁸³ (S) (a)

Meeting with NATO Secretary General Spaak. During his stay in Paris Dulles discussed the Berlin problem and the anticipated negotiations with the Soviet Union not only with the French

⁸²From Paris, tel. SECTO 17, Feb. 6, 1959, secret.

⁸³Memorandum SVE/MC-14 by Dulles of conversation with Couve de Murville, Feb. 2, 1959, secret.

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leaders but also with NATO Secretary General Spaak. Spaak affirmed that the spirit of NATO was good. The NATO countries, he said, were determined that the Western position in Berlin should be held and that the Berlin situation should be discussed with the Soviet Union only in relation to the German problem in general. With respect to such negotiations, Spaak felt that the positions of East and West were far apart with little likelihood of a compromise. He therefore suggested that the Western Powers, without yielding in principle, should devise a new approach to the problem.

In spite of their talk about negotiations which would lead to changes in the world situation, Dulles and Spaak seemed to be in agreement that certain advantages attached to the maintenance of the status quo in Germany and that any change would involve a revamping of the existing satisfactory arrangements for European cooperation and for German participation in the alliance. As Dulles noted in his record of this conversation, this was said "in a mood of nostalgia rather than as a program" and in recognition of the fact that "even the best effort" may not result in significant progress.⁸⁴

3. Bonn Conversations, February 7-8

The Secretary's last stop was Bonn and, on the basis of his exchanges with Adenauer, he expected this to be the most difficult phase of his trip. At the same time Dulles himself, as the record of his conversations in London and Paris indicates, was far from confident that the forthcoming conference with the Soviet Union would produce results which would be either significant or beneficial to the West. The Secretary's dilemma on the eve of this meeting with Adenauer emerges very clearly from the report he sent to President Eisenhower after the conclusion of his principal talks in Paris. [Dulles told the President that there seemed to be agreement in London and Paris that the Chancellor was "pretty much out of touch with his advisers and with current developments" and that it was hoped that Dulles might be able to make him see the possibilities in the situation "to which he is now blind." These possibilities, however, as]

(X)
(AS)

⁸⁴Memorandum SVE/MC-13 by Dulles of conversation with Spaak, Feb. 6, 1959, secret.

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Dulles told the President, were not so brilliant "that I feel confident that they have much penetrating power." A good deal could be said in favor of the status quo, and any change would be for the worse and "open up serious problems." Nevertheless, this was not a position which the West could take publicly and still command the support of public opinion.⁸⁵

Meetings of February 7. Before the first meeting in the presence of advisers opened on February 7, Adenauer requested a private meeting with the Secretary. His purpose was to acquaint Dulles with certain statements made recently by the British Ambassador at Bonn when he handed Adenauer a letter from Macmillan concerning the Prime Minister's forthcoming visit to Moscow. The essence of the Ambassador's remarks, according to Adenauer, was as follows: The Western Powers were facing dangers which the public under-estimated. The public was not aware that war might have to be waged for the freedom of Berlin. Therefore, the situation required careful examination, and the first thing which stood out was that the existence of the GDR was a fact. True, the regime in the Soviet zone was a stooge of the USSR, but, all the same, people did negotiate with it. Whatever the governments said officially, the public would see the question in terms of whether it would be worth going to war over the recognition or non-recognition of the GDR.

(b1)
(b2)
(AS)

Dulles called the quoted remarks unfortunate and more disturbing than anything he had heard in London. To be sure, there had been tendencies in that direction but nothing as open as that. He felt that the issue involved was much more fundamental, namely, that one must not make concessions because the Soviet Union threatened war. This was the reason that he had been assailed for his "brinkmanship", his determination to go to the brink of war rather than yield under threat. The great danger was always that the Soviet Union would believe that the West was willing to make concessions. Consequently, it would be very bad if Macmillan during his visit in Moscow should leave such an impression behind him.

⁸⁵From Paris, tel. DULTE 8, Feb. 6, 1959, secret (removed from eyes only category, classified as secret only by Warren A. Henderson, S/S-S, May 4, 1965).

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Adenauer emphasized that the recognition of the GDR would be a complete reversal of policy and said that he would write to Macmillan in that matter. Dulles expressed hope that everything would be straightened out in the end. But he also assured the Chancellor that, whether or not London was a bit confused at the moment, the final decision rested with the nation which held the greatest power. If weakness displayed by the United Kingdom or other allies should lead to concessions which the United States considered dangerous to peace, the United States would express its views very clearly and they would prevail.⁸⁶

Immediately following their private meeting, the Secretary and the Chancellor were joined by Ambassador Bruce, Foreign Minister Brentano, and other high-ranking American and German officials. Dulles now reported on his conversations at London and Paris and repeated his proposal that, at the conference with the Soviet Union, the West should take as the point of departure its proposals of 1955, which would be presented in a new setting. Specifically, he said, there ought to be greater emphasis on a German peace treaty and less exclusive concern with reunification. Paying tribute to West Germany's tremendous achievements under Adenauer and to Germany's part in European military, economic, and political integration, Dulles declared that the Soviet Union must not be given the impression that the West was prepared to buy reunification at the price of sacrificing all these gains with the result of leaving Germany alone in Central Europe in a position to apply the East against the West. On the contrary, the Western Powers should show at a conference that these gains could be preserved with a unified Germany without endangering the Soviet Union. To be sure, Dulles did not expect the Soviet Union to agree to any measures which would not ultimately lead to the collapse of the structure of European integration. But it was up to the Western Powers to show the world that they were prepared to pursue a sound and constructive policy which carried no threat to the Soviet Union.

Dulles expressed the hope that the Federal Republic would contribute to such a policy by taking measures along the lines of the Chancellor's most recent letter, i.e., establishment of

⁸⁶Memorandum by Weber (Foreign Office, Federal Republic), dated Feb. 13, 1959, of conversation between Dulles and Adenauer, Feb. 7, 1959, top secret. No U.S. record of this conversation seems to have been made.

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diplomatic relations with Poland and Czechoslovakia, issuance of a statement on the Oder-Neisse problem, and expanding de facto relations with the GDR to make the attractive influence of the Federal Republic felt in the Soviet Zone.

Adenauer expressed general agreement with the Secretary's presentation regarding the 1955 proposals and reunification. As for de facto relations with East Germany, he declared that the Federal Republic had done as much as it could but that the GDR was always raising barriers. On the subject of security, the Chancellor spoke disparagingly of the myriad regional security plans of the Rapacki type which were being tossed about in many quarters and declared that there could be no peace until there was nuclear disarmament. Therefore, the Western Powers should make it clear that until this happened they would do nothing to weaken Germany's ties with the West.

Foreign Minister Brentano emphasized that there were certain limits beyond which the Government of the Federal Republic could not be expected to go. It could not accept any proposals requiring it to give up its ties with the West; nor could it accept the Soviet proposal for a peace treaty which would give the Soviet Union the right of intervention. Brentano declared that the Berlin problem could not be solved in isolation but had to be dealt with in the broader context of the German problem. If a conference arranged to discuss the broader German problem should produce an interim solution, it would be acceptable only if Berlin's basic rights were protected. In any event, it was important to make it clear to the Soviet Union that any attempt to tamper with Berlin on a unilateral basis would be met by the resistance of the free world.

In conclusion, Dulles stated that the problem was not one of reaching agreement with the Soviet Union but rather of keeping the support of free world opinion by indicating the West's willingness to do what was decent and fair and by demonstrating that the cold war continued only because the Soviet Union would not make or keep agreements unless they helped it win the cold war. The negative results of the nuclear test talks held at Geneva were anticipated, but it was necessary to keep negotiating with the Soviet Union if only to demonstrate its bad faith. In

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the German question the West had a strong case to make but it was necessary to marshal the case effectively.⁸⁷

Meetings of February 8. The following day, Dulles and Adenauer continued their discussions, at first in a smaller group with only their closest advisers present. Adenauer, who had expressed the desire to discuss further the critical situation of Berlin, stated that he agreed that it would be wise to bury the Berlin crisis under a layer of broader problems in a conference with the Russians. In case of a failure of such a conference, however, the Berlin crisis would become more acute, and there might be need for an interim solution. The Chancellor was rather vague about his ideas on that subject and eventually named as the best provisional solution an indefinite deferral of the May 27 date on which the Soviet Union was planning to transfer its responsibilities in Berlin to the GDR. In talking about a Berlin solution, Adenauer also expressed fear of Allied disunity resulting from weakness shown by the British but stated at the same time that the situation should not be permitted to develop to a point where nuclear weapons would be used. Dulles remarked, in this connection, that the Soviet Union would withdraw from its present position if the West were united and willing to take the risk of a general war in which it obviously would not forego the use of nuclear weapons. (6/13)

Concluding his statements, Dulles declared that the purpose of his trip was to cement Western unity and that, if the Federal Republic was unwilling to pursue as strong a policy as the United States proposed, now was the time that this should be disclosed. When the Chancellor replied that his Government was willing to follow the Secretary's program but that he feared a world war over Berlin would not command public support in the Western countries, Dulles assured him that a policy as he had outlined it would indeed have public support in the United States and that the Governments of France and Great Britain also favored a strong stand.⁸⁸

⁸⁷Memorandum SVE/MC-20 by Klein (Embassy Bonn) of conversation among Dulles, Adenauer, von Brentano, and others, Feb. 7, 1959, secret; from Bonn, tel. SECTO 24, Feb. 7, secret.

⁸⁸Memorandum SVE/MC-15 by Merchant (EUR) of conversation among Dulles, Adenauer, Merchant, and others, Feb. 8, 1959, top secret.

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At an immediately following meeting attended by a larger group, which concluded the discussion, Brentano suggested that the proposals outlined in the Chancellor's memorandum of January 30 to Dulles should be introduced in the course of the negotiations rather than in the initial stage. Dulles agreed and promised that the United States would consult very intimately with the Federal Republic, which would not be a participant in the Conference with the Soviet Union, on the initial program to be presented by the Western Powers. Adenauer, making a final point, declared that the West should make it absolutely clear that it would not make a single concession without obtaining a counter-concession. Concessions without counter-concessions only make the Soviet Union more greedy and more intransigent, and the Chancellor wished to have this precept brought to the attention of all those in the press and in parliaments who seemed to insist only upon a Western demonstration of flexibility.^{88a}

4. Dulles' Summary of the Talks

Upon his return to Washington, Dulles summed up the results of his journey to the Allied capitals in a statement issued on February 9 in which he emphasized that the "unity and firmness of our position" expressed in the Four-Power communiqué had been reconfirmed and that the West was resolved "that our position in, and access to, West Berlin shall be preserved". Regarding negotiations Dulles stated that views were exchanged on a Foreign Ministers meeting with the Soviet Union "at which all aspects of the German problem can be discussed, not only Berlin and a peace treaty, as the Soviets proposed, but also reunification and European security, as the Western Powers have proposed."^{88b}

Dulles' talks with the European Allies during this visit were the last official negotiations conducted by the gravely ill Secretary. On February 10 Dulles went to the hospital and never returned to his work. On March 30 he submitted his resignation, which President Eisenhower accepted on April 15.^{88c}

^{88a}Memorandum SVE/MC-19 by Klein (Embassy Bonn) of conversation among Dulles, Adenauer, von Brentano, and others, Feb. 8, 1959, secret; to Bonn, tel. 1753, Feb. 9, 1959, secret.

^{88b}Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 412-413.

^{88c}See Eleanor Lansing Dulles, John Foster Dulles: The Last Year (New York, 1963), pp. 227-229.

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D. Washington Working Group Discussions and the Western Note
of February 16, 1959

1. Working Group Meetings, February 4-13^{88d}

While the Secretary held talks with the leaders of the Western Alliance, a Four-Power Working Group conferred in Washington. This Working Group met under Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Foy D. Kohler's chairmanship from February 4 until it adjourned on February 13.

The Working Group was to coordinate the replies to the Soviet note of January 10. The main argument which developed in the performance of this task concerned the role to be played by German advisers at the forthcoming conference with the Soviet Union. The French objected to any formulation in the note which would allow for the "attendance" of German experts, because this would encourage attendance by the GDR. At the most, the French were prepared to accept a wording stressing "consultation" with German experts at the conference. That meant that West German experts would be consulted by the Allies and East German experts by the Soviet Union but that East German and West German experts would have no dealings with each other. The Germans, on the other hand, wished to have a reference to their active participation or "attendance" included in the note, and they were supported in this matter by the British, who argued that failure to deal with the problem of German attendance in the note would fatally prejudice the chances for discussing reunification and that the conference under these conditions "would never even get off the ground."

The deadlock in the Working Group over this issue was temporary. It ended in a compromise whereby the French accepted a wording of the note which put more emphasis on the German role

^{88d}These Working Group meetings, as well as subsequent Working Group meetings charged with the task of preparing a Western position for the forthcoming conference with the Soviet Union, were preceded by a great deal of internal discussion within the United States Government. In the course of these discussions various proposals were put forward in which plans for German reunification and for a Berlin solution were combined with European security arrangements.

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at the conference, while in return the French obtained a revision of the draft instructions to the Western Ambassadors at Moscow regarding what they should tell Gromyko when they presented the replies to the Soviet note of January 10. Under the revised instructions the Ambassadors were to say that the manner in which the German experts would be consulted was to be arranged by the four Foreign Ministers.^{88e}

The Washington Working Group also considered questions of substance which might arise in the course of a conference with the Soviet Union on the German question. In a discussion of these questions on a "personal and informal basis", a paper was developed and approved in the form of summary statements and a questionnaire regarding German reunification, European security, and Berlin. On the last subject the questions raised had to do with the feasibility of seeking an isolated solution for Berlin without a German solution, of holding free elections for all of Berlin prior to German reunification, of concluding an agreement with the Soviet Union regarding propaganda and "subversive activities" in West Berlin, and of bringing the United Nations or the Court of International Justice into the Berlin problem.

The questionnaire was designed to assist the Governments in preparing their positions and, in particular, to provide a framework for developing positions which would be reviewed at a second series of Working Group meetings scheduled for early March. In a preliminary discussion of the questionnaire before the Working Group adjourned on February 13, there was agreement that the West must present "demonstratively reasonable" proposals to command the support of public opinion. With regard to the specific questions raised, it was agreed that the West must present counterproposals on Berlin for the period prior to reunification. There was also a consensus that more capital should be made of

^{88e} Memorandum by Kohler (EUR) to Merchant (EUR), "Four Power Working Group Meetings", Feb. 16, 1959, secret; to London, tel. TOSEC 7, Feb. 4, 1959, secret; to Paris, tel. TOSEC 15, Feb. 5, secret; from Paris, tel. SECTO 19, Feb. 6, secret; to Bonn, tel. TOSEC 28, Feb. 7, secret; to Paris, tel. 2875, Feb. 9, secret; to Paris tel. TOPOL 2658, Feb. 10, secret.

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West Germany's attraction for the East Germans although strong doubts were voiced concerning the idea of confederation.⁸⁹

2. Note to Moscow, February 16, and Accompanying Instructions

After the NATO representatives had also taken a hand in the final drafting of the reply to the Soviet note of January 10, and of the accompanying instructions to the Ambassadors, the three Western nations presented their notes to the Kremlin on February 16. The United States, in its note, referred to the danger inherent in the continued partition of Germany and to the proposals in its notes of September 30 and December 31, 1958 for negotiations on that subject. The United States also recalled its stated position regarding the announced intention of the Soviet Union "to abdicate certain of its internationally agreed responsibilities and obligations in regard to Berlin." As for the Soviet note of January 10 itself, the United States said that, while that note contained many statements and proposals with which it did not agree, it did not propose to discuss them in its own note as such a discussion would not be "helpful." The United States said that it was prepared to participate in a conference of the Foreign Ministers of the USSR, France, Britain, and the United States and to accept any suggestions as to a date and place which would be fixed by mutual agreement and settled through diplomatic channels. The "controversial" final paragraph, concerning German participation, read as follows: "It is suggested that German advisers should be invited to the conference and should be consulted."

In their instructions for oral comments to be made to Gromyko in presenting the note, the three Western Ambassadors were told of Western preferences concerning the place (Geneva or Vienna but not Warsaw or Prague), the date (around May 10), and the composition of the conference. If Gromyko proposed Polish or Czech participation in the conference, the Ambassadors were to reject it

⁸⁹Memorandum by Kohler (EUR) to Merchant (EUR), "Four Power Working Group Meetings", Feb. 16, 1959, secret; Working Group on Reply to the Soviet Note of January 10, 1959, "Working Group Paper on German Reunification, European Security and Berlin", Feb. 11, 1959, revised Feb. 12 and 13 (GWG 20), secret; unsigned and undated memorandum, "Summary of Answers to the Four Power Working Group Questionnaire on German Reunification, European Security and Berlin", secret; to Bonn, tel. 1827, Feb. 14, 1959, secret.

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with the argument that the four Powers had special responsibility for the German question and that the "preliminary exchanges of opinions" among the four Powers suggested in the Soviet note of January 10 applied to discussions of the whole German question. As for German participation, the Ambassadors were to state in reply to questions regarding the meaning of the term "advisers" that "it would be for the Federal Government and the 'GDR authorities' to nominate whoever they thought fit" and that "arrangements regarding consultation with the German advisers will be worked out by the Foreign Ministers at the conference."

With respect to the problem of European security, the Ambassadors were authorized to state, if asked by Gromyko, that the Western Powers did propose to discuss the disarmament problem "as it related to arriving at solutions for the German problem." In this connection the instructions referred to paragraph 6 of the NATO declaration on Berlin of December 16, 1958, which expressed the West's willingness to examine the problems of European security and disarmament.⁹⁰

E. Exchanges Regarding the Nature of an East-West Meeting

1. Soviet Note of March 2, 1959

On March 2, in a reply to the Western notes of February 16, the Soviet Union put forward its own ideas on the subject of the proposed conference. Complaining in its note to the United States that the West had made no "concrete proposals" regarding a German peace treaty, the convening of a peace conference, and the "normalization of the situation in Berlin", the Soviet Union restated its well-known position that there could be no progress on the German question "without accounting for the existence of two independent German states."

Two proposals in the Soviet note of March 2 were spelled out in more specific terms than they had been in earlier communications. First, the Soviet Union urged a meeting of the Heads of Government which "could consider a wider circle of questions" than could a conference of Foreign Ministers, i.e., not only a German peace

⁹⁰To Paris, tel. TOPOL 2658, Feb. 10; tel. TOPOL 2710, Feb. 13; from Paris, tel. POLTO 2319, Feb. 15, 1959; secret; Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 413-414.

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treaty but also questions of European security and disarmament. Secondly, "interested countries, like Poland and Czechoslovakia, as states bordering on Germany which became the first victims of Hitlerite aggression", could participate in these discussions at the summit. The Federal Republic and the GDR, of course, should also be represented in the examination of a German peace treaty at such a summit conference.

The Soviet Union, while believing that "a meeting on the highest level" at this time had "the greatest chances of achieving positive results", thought it nevertheless possible that a conference of the Foreign Ministers of the USSR, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Poland, and Czechoslovakia could be convoked to examine questions "concerning the peace treaty with Germany and concerning West Berlin" in the event that the Western Powers were "not yet ready to take part in a summit conference. The Soviet Union thought it appropriate that such a meeting of Foreign Ministers, at which the FRG and the GDR would also be represented, should not last longer than two or three months, and it suggested Vienna or Geneva as the place and April as the date for either a Heads of Government meeting or a Foreign Ministers conference."⁹¹

2. British Pressure for a Summit Meeting

The Moscow call for a summit meeting found an echo in British Prime Minister Macmillan, who was concluding a visit to the Soviet Union (February 21-March 3) when the Soviet note of March 2 was delivered and who a week later visited Paris then Bonn. The final communiqué on Macmillan's visit to the Soviet Union stated that Macmillan and Khrushchev, after a full exchange of views on Germany and Berlin, were "unable to agree about the juridical and political aspects of the problems involved" but recognized that these problems should be urgently settled and that there was need for "early negotiations between the interested governments".^{91a} In subsequent exchanges with Western leaders, the British pressed hard for an East-West summit meeting. [On Macmillan's instructions the British Ambassador wrote to the Acting Secretary on March 9 to tell him that the Prime Minister and Lloyd were convinced that effective negotiations on Germany, Berlin, or "anything" could]

⁹¹Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 414-420.

^{91a}Keesing's Contemporary Archives, XII, 1959-1960, p. 16721.

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only be conducted with Khrushchev and that "this means a summit meeting." If there should be neither compromise nor backing down on the Berlin issue, the West would be faced with the alternatives of war or diplomatic defeat. Such momentous decisions, however, should be taken only after a summit meeting. For this reason Macmillan and Lloyd felt with regard to the reply to the Soviet note that they would have to press for inclusion of a definite proposal concerning a summit meeting. But they would be willing to abandon their preference for a summit meeting in the immediate future and to agree to a Foreign Ministers meeting on the understanding that there would be a subsequent summit.⁹²

After Macmillan's visit to Bonn, which took place March 10-11, Caccia again wrote to Herter, telling him that the Prime Minister had strongly argued with Adenauer in favor of a summit meeting and had even urged that the West should fix a date for it so as to prevent the Soviet Union from precipitating a crisis. On March 15 Herter informed Caccia that he had taken the matter up with President Eisenhower and that both of them felt that fixing a date for the summit meeting would condemn the Foreign Ministers conference to sterility. Moreover, the West had consistently held the position that a summit meeting could only be accepted if the preparations indicated a real prospect for agreements on significant issues. Deviation from this position would give a "dangerous impression of weakness." Accordingly, a passage relating to a summit meeting in accordance with this consistent Western position formed part of the United States draft for a reply.⁹³

3. Agreement on Western Reply to the Soviet Note: Working Group and Eisenhower-Macmillan Discussions

The task of coordinating the reply to the Soviet note of March 2 had been entrusted at once to the Working Group, which

⁹²Letter, Caccia to Herter, Mar. 9, 1959, secret.

⁹³Letter, Caccia to Herter, Mar. 13, 1959, sent in tel. 3390 to Paris, Mar. 14, secret; letter, Herter to Caccia, sent in tel. 3391 to Paris, Mar. 15, secret. In a radio and television address to the American people on March 16, President Eisenhower, referring to the Soviet note of March 2 and to the Allied replies, stated that, "assuming developments that justify a summer meeting at the Summit, the United States would be ready to participate in that further effort." (Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 437-441.)

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convened in Paris on March 9. The Working Group eventually reached agreement on the treatment of the summit question in the Western response. Indeed, it reached considerable agreement on the substance of the reply as a whole. [Some differences remained, however, with respect to the formulation of certain operative paragraphs, especially in the matter of Czech and Polish participation in the conference. The French, above all, were reluctant to grant the Czech and Poles more than observer status at the conference. They felt that otherwise it would be more difficult to cope with any possible Italian request for participation and to deny the Czechs and Poles the opportunity of full membership at the conference. Full membership for the Czechs and Poles would enable them to participate even in the discussion of those questions in which they had "no direct and legitimate concern." 94]

The differences which could not be resolved within the Working Group were referred to the Governments. In the case of the United States and Britain the differences were settled during a visit by Macmillan with President Eisenhower at Camp David, March 20-22. 94a Since the French for the most part went along with the Anglo-American resolution of these differences, the Camp David text, except for minor changes, became the final version of the United States note which was presented to the Soviet Union on March 26. 94b

4. American Note of March 26, 1959

In its note of March 26, the United States proposed a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the USSR, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France to convene at Geneva on May 11. The conference would consider "questions relating to Germany, including a peace treaty with Germany, and the question of Berlin." The United States stipulated, however, that any participating Government should have the opportunity to present its views on any question which it considered "relevant to the problem under consideration." The United States emphasized that the purpose of the Foreign Ministers

⁹⁴From Paris, tel. 3399, Mar. 17, 1959, confidential; tel. 3444, Mar. 19, secret; and tel. 3461, Mar. 19, secret.

^{94a}See also post, pp. 111-112.

^{94b}From Camp David, tel. CPD-1017, Mar. 21, 1959, and tel. CPC-1018, Mar. 21, both secret.

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meeting should be to reach "positive agreements" over the widest field possible, to narrow the differences between the respective points of view, and "to prepare constructive proposals for consideration by a conference of Heads of Government later in the summer." Thus, defining the terms of its acceptance of the Soviet proposal for a summit conference, the United States made it clear that it would participate "on this understanding and as soon as developments in the Foreign Ministers meeting justified holding a summit conference." Such a conference "could consider and if possible resolve some wider problems", such as those referred to in previous Soviet-American communications.

With respect to the controversial problem of Czech and Polish participation, the United States recognized "the legitimate and direct interest" of these countries in certain matters to be discussed at the conference and declared that the participation of other countries "at a certain stage in negotiations could therefore be contemplated." The United States felt, however, that the proposed meeting should involve at first "only the four powers responsible for Germany." As for German participation, the United States merely noted that the Soviet Union agreed with the American proposal of February 16 that German advisers "should be invited to the meeting of May 11 and be consulted."⁹⁵

5. Soviet Agreement to a Foreign Ministers Conference at Geneva

On March 30 the Soviet Union expressed its agreement with the Western proposals regarding the agenda, date, and place of the conference but regreted that "full mutual understanding" had not been reached on the question of Czech and Polish participation. The Soviet Union considered it "possible" that this question would be decided at the conference itself.^{95a}

⁹⁵Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 441-442.

^{95a}Note 23/OSA from the Soviet Foreign Office, handed to Ambassador Thompson, Mar. 30, 1959.

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F. Paris Working Group Sessions on a Western
Negotiating Position

1. Working Group Meetings, March 9-21, 1959

In the Four-Power Working Group meetings which began at Paris on March 9 the coordination of the Western replies to the Soviet note of March 2 was a secondary task. The primary task of the Working Group was to develop a Western negotiating position for the East-West conclave. By the time the Working Group adjourned on March 21 it had proposed a report, later the subject of sharp disagreement among the Foreign Ministers, which contained far-reaching recommendations on the questions of Berlin, Germany, and European security. Martin J. Hillenbrand, Director of the Office of German Affairs in the Department of State, headed the United States Delegation to these crucial Working Group meetings.

2. Proposals and Discussions

Early in the proceedings, at a Working Group meeting of March 12, the United States submitted a paper on the elements of a Western position.⁹⁶ The American paper discussed Soviet intentions and Western objectives and tactics and proposed a Western offer on German reunification, European security, and Berlin. The proposed offer was designed as a package of proposals to be put into effect in stages according to the following principles:

- 1) No steps to be taken in the field of security until an agreement was signed and a start had been made toward implementing a reunification plan.
- 2) No changes involving deployment of Western troops or arms until "significant and irreversible progress" toward reunification had occurred.

⁹⁶For earlier drafts and for Department of Defense and other comments which were taken into account in the final paper, see "The Elements of a Conference with the Soviets", drafts dated Mar. 3, 6, and 9; letter, Quarles (Department of Defense) to Herter, Mar. 6, secret; letter from the Department of Defense I-13097 to Kohler, Mar. 18, and enclosures, secret; to Paris, tel. 3319, Mar. 11, secret.

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3) The Berlin proposals would be interim measures pending reunification to go into effect in the first stage of the proposed measures. In this stage the four Powers would issue common declarations by which they would assume various obligations, especially with regard to abstaining from the use of force, banning chemical, bacteriological, and nuclear arms in a "special security area", and limiting of the level of armed forces.

The Berlin proposals put forward in the American working paper provided for unification of East and West Berlin through free elections under United Nations supervision; for holding, likewise under United Nations supervision and at the same time as the elections, a plebiscite to determine whether foreign troops should remain in Berlin and, if so, what countries should provide such troops; for removal of the GDR capital from Berlin so that Berlin could become the capital of a reunited Germany when reunification had been achieved; and for a four-Power guarantee of access to Berlin during the interim period pending German reunification.

The American Delegation, in submitting its paper, noted that the United States accepted the probability that a basic agreement with the USSR was not possible at the time, and the Delegation explained that the American proposals, based on a reformulation of "traditional" positions and introduction of certain innovations, could give the West a maximum tactical advantage and also provide an opportunity for prolonged discussions if the USSR "should possibly want cover for withdrawal." Furthermore, the introduction of the disarmament features should give an impression of a greater desire for accommodation and take account of Adenauer's emphasis on disarmament.⁹⁷

Papers were put in also by the other delegations. The British circulated a paper on "Elements of an Interim Berlin Settlement" and another one on "A Separate Peace Treaty Between the Soviet Union and East Germany". The French tabled a paper entitled, "Soviet Objectives Concerning the German Question", while the Germans circulated two papers, a "Proposal for Phased Plan on

⁹⁷From Paris, tel. 3326, Mar. 12, 1959, secret.

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Reunification" and a "Proposal for a Plebiscite on the Reunification of Germany".⁹⁸

The United States Delegation, in evaluating the attitudes of the other delegations as expressed in their papers and in the Working Group discussions, concluded that the British, although generally favorable to the position advanced in the American paper, regarded the Berlin proposals which the West was prepared to make separately from a general settlement as the "crux of the problem." The Delegation reported that the British were interested in maintaining "maximum fluidity" in the Western position and, while being "extremely helpful in providing ideas and language" for the drafting, were unable to reveal the "true bent of their thinking" on Berlin and European security, except in occasional references. (b) (5)

With respect to the Germans, the American Delegation felt that they seemed to have little to contribute, except for reviving an earlier reunification plan^{98a} which had been incorporated in part into the American working paper. As the sessions went on the German delegates gave the impression of remaining "curiously limp and uninstructed throughout." Matters changed somewhat toward the end when Grewe joined the Delegation and submitted his own plan for a preliminary stage of reunification. The Grewe plan provided that the Federal Republic at some stage in the negotiations would indicate its willingness to enter into discussions with the East German authorities in the matter of reunification and the formation of an all-German government. The Federal Government would also be willing to discuss the restoration of economic and cultural exchanges between East and West Germany; the condition for such exchanges would be that the situation in East Germany would evolve in conformity with articles 14-16 of the Soviet Draft treaty of

⁹⁸From Paris, tel. 3285, Mar. 11, 1959, secret; tel. 3286, Mar. 11, confidential; tel. 3289, Mar. 11, secret; and tel. 3328, Mar. 13, secret; from Paris airgram G-1218, Mar. 11, 1959, confidential; airgram G-1221, Mar. 12, confidential; airgram G-1223, Mar. 12, secret; airgram G-1226, Mar. 13, confidential; airgram G-1245, Mar. 14, secret; and airgram G-1252, Mar. 18, secret.

^{98a}The reference is to the so-called Meissner-Fechter plan drawn up by two members of the German Delegation to the Working Group on German Unity in March 1957.

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January 10, articles which dealt with the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual and the guarantees of free activity for political parties and organizations. The Working Group eventually agreed not to incorporate Grewe's plan into its own plan for reunification but to issue it as a supplementary paper.

As for the French, the American Delegation believed that they were following a "conservative, essentially negative line" and that their approach to new ideas was "hesitant and legalistic, with a heavy emphasis on possible dangers" and with little appreciation of the possible advantages to the West, particularly in terms of public relations. On the other hand, the French, with "apparent ambivalence", continued to point out the desirability of considering for Germany after reunification a special status in NATO which would limit the freedom of choice of the all-German Government with respect to alliances.⁹⁹

3. Working Group Report

Content of the Report. The report of the Paris Working Group took as its point of departure the proposition that the Soviet threat against the Allied position in Berlin must be averted by a show of Western determination not to yield to pressure and at the same time by an offer to negotiate. The report outlined a plan for negotiations in which the West would submit a revision of its plans for German reunification and European security.

In the field of reunification the report recommended a modification of the principle of the Eden plan presented at the Berlin Foreign Ministers Meeting in 1954 and at the Geneva Foreign Ministers Meeting in 1955.¹⁰⁰ It proposed that free all-German elections be postponed for an interim period of 1 to 3 years and that in the period before the elections a non-elected all-German commission be established. Selection of this group on the basis of the number of states in the Federal Republic and in East Germany would result in a ratio of 11 Western to 6 Eastern representatives. The task of the commission would be to prepare for elections, to undertake certain non-political tasks in the fields

⁹⁹From Paris, tel. 3354, Mar. 14, 1959; tel. 3462, Mar. 19; and tel. 3487, Mar. 20; all secret.

¹⁰⁰Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 146-149, 192-195.

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of technical, commercial, and cultural contacts, and to promote the free movement of ideas and goods. The presence of East German Communists on this commission would be considered acceptable in view of its limited functions.

The Working Group approved the German plan for the election in the German Laender of representatives to an all-German Council. The Council, under this plan, would prepare elections for an all-German National Assembly which in turn would draft an all-German constitution and form an all-German Government. The Working Group agreed that a similar plan presented by the American Delegation should also be considered as a possible alternative to the German proposal. The American plan would eliminate the provisions regarding election of an all-German Council and would provide for all-German elections at the end of the three-year period. Under either plan there was to be no opportunity for the GDR to acquire influence over the internal policy of the Federal Republic in the intermediary period either through the extension of the powers of an all-German body or the development of a "sort of loose confederation". It was also agreed that, in order to cope with the Soviet charge, made on previous occasions, that Western plans for reunification would enable the Western majority to liquidate the "social achievements" of the GDR, the West should propose giving the East German Laender in a reunified Germany special rights enabling them to keep or abandon these "social achievements".

As for the relationship of security measures to German reunification, the Working Group agreed that, before significant progress had been made in the solution of political problems, such security measures should be considered only with the greatest caution, so as to avoid weakening the Western defense system in the absence of tangible political results. The Working Group therefore developed a four-stage plan for synchronized measures in the fields of security and reunification. In Stage I (short in duration) the four Powers would issue declarations in the field of European security, that is, with respect to peaceful settlements of disputes, renunciation of the use of force, non-assistance to aggressors, and non-transfer of nuclear warheads into a "special security area" comprising all of Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and possibly Hungary; in Stage II (preceding all-German elections) no measures altering the military capacities of the West would be taken; only in Stage II (following all-German elections) would measures of limitation and control be introduced; in Stage IV a German peace treaty would be concluded.

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In the plan, measures for limitations in a European security area were linked with agreements on overall troop strength as developed in disarmament discussions with the Soviet Union. There was no complete agreement on some of the security measures proposed. All delegations reserved their positions on certain points pending more careful study by their Governments. The French were reluctant to associate any portion of the disarmament "package" developed in 1957¹⁰¹ with plans for German reunification and European security unless all the elements of the "package" were included.

The Working Group was unable to agree on whether a draft of a peace treaty or the principles of a peace treaty should be brought forward, even with the necessary reservations about the position of an eventual German government.

With regard to Berlin, the Working Group agreed on the following points:

- 1) A Berlin settlement on a four-Power basis would be preferable to a United Nations solution.
- 2) Any settlement should permit the Western occupation troops to remain in Berlin with unlimited access.
- 3) The present basis of the right of the Western Powers to remain in Berlin, i.e., the right of conquest, should be maintained; a Four-Power agreement modifying the present basis would not be acceptable.
- 4) A certain variant of the "agent" theory could be considered.
- 5) As a fall-back position, the West might propose a settlement for all of Berlin, guaranteed by troops of the four Powers.

¹⁰¹The reference is presumably to the Western Working Paper, "Proposals for Partial Measures of Disarmament", submitted to the U.N. Disarmament Subcommittee, Aug. 29, 1957; for text, see Documents on Disarmament, 1945-1959 (Department of State publication 7008), II, 868-874.

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6) Any fall-back position going farther than 5) would probably be incompatible with the foregoing principles.

Evaluation by United States Delegation. Evaluating the efforts of the Working Group, the United States Delegation remarked that the final product of the Paris meetings was "better than it might have been." Given the various stages of preparedness reached by the different Foreign Offices, it said, the Working Group went as far as it could in making recommendations and proposals for further consideration.¹⁰²

G. Washington Foreign Ministers Meetings,
March 31-April 4, 1959

1. Agreement on Further Preparations for East-West Meeting

The Paris Working Group meetings which produced the Four-Power Working Paper on European security, German reunification, and Berlin represented a considerable advance in the preparation of a Western position for the conference with the Soviet Union. Agreement on the timetable and procedures for the remaining phases of the preparatory work was reached in the course of Anglo-American talks during Prime Minister Macmillan's visit with President Eisenhower at Camp David, March 20-22, and was subsequently concurred in by the French and West German Governments.

According to this agreed program, the next step was to be a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the United States, the United

¹⁰²"Report of the Four Power Working Group on German Reunification, European Security and Berlin," Paris, Mar. 21, 1959; Annex A, "Proposal for Phased Plan for German Reunification, European Security and a German Peace Settlement," Mar. 20; Annex B, "Elements of an Interim Berlin Settlement"; Supplementary Paper 1, "Estimate of Soviet Intentions"; Supplementary Paper 2, "A Separate Peace Treaty Between the Soviet Union and East Germany"; Supplementary Paper 3, "Proposal Concerning a Preliminary Stage of Reunification"; all secret; "Summary of Working Group Report," secret; from Paris, tel. 3464, Mar. 20, 1959; tel. 3486, Mar. 20; tel. 3487, Mar. 20; all secret. The account of the Working Group Report in the text of this study follows closely the "Summary of Working Group Report" in the files.

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Kingdom, France, and Western Germany in Washington beginning March 31. At this meeting the Foreign Ministers would review the work of the Paris Working Group, provide guidance for another series of Working Group meetings in April, and report to the NATO Foreign Ministers (meeting in Washington April 2-4) on the Western preparations for the meeting with the Soviet Union.¹⁰³

2. Quadripartite Meeting of Western Foreign Ministers

Herter's Stress on Western Plan as "Package" Proposal. At the outset of the discussions by the Four Foreign Ministers, Acting Secretary Herter stressed that the Western plan was a "comprehensive package" designed to appear reasonable and to receive the support of the public in the West. It was especially important, he said, to have it clearly spelled out that the various parts of the package were inseparable. Otherwise the other side would attempt to pick out those pieces of the plan which suited it and would try to get them accepted independently of the other features.

Brentano's Criticism of the Reunification Proposals. The most startling feature of the discussions was an assault by the German Foreign Minister on the reunification proposals in the Working Group report. Brentano particularly attacked the alternate American plan for reunification, which had provided for an all-German body composed of two delegates from each of the Laender of East and West Germany and from East and West Berlin to draft an electoral law and a constitution to be submitted to the German people in a plebiscite. Brentano, furthermore, objected to the stipulation that the draft constitution should vest authority to regulate social and economic matters in freely elected Laender legislatures. He saw in the reunification proposals in the Working Group report a development toward the idea of confederation, which he called "completely unacceptable". He declared that an all-German committee in which almost one-third of the members would be selected by GDR authorities could not be trusted with drafting a German constitution; the provision in the American plan for a popular referendum on the constitution was not a satisfactory]

(1)
(a)
(a5)

¹⁰³Anglo-American Talks, March 1959, Agreed Minute, secret; Annex 1, "Agreed Procedures for Arriving at the Western Position to be Presented in the May Foreign Ministers Meeting with the Soviets"; to Bonn, tel. 2221, Mar. 23, 1959, secret.

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safeguard because the German population would be "quite uncritical" and would vote in a "highly emotional frame of mind" if it felt that an affirmative vote would bring about reunification.

Although Brentano's most vigorous criticism was directed against the American alternate plan, he did not have much use either for the phased plan for reunification adopted by the Working Group as a whole. He conceded that the proposals contained in that plan did not go "nearly so far" as the alternate plan but emphasized that the Foreign Ministers had to consider the Working Group recommendations very carefully and raise all the objections necessary. He would be "very disturbed" if the Working Group proposals were accepted. Among all the papers produced by the Working Group, he favored the German plan introduced toward the end of the meetings (the Grewe plan), which was based on the recognition of human rights and political liberties in the Soviet zone as a precondition for any cooperation between the Federal Republic and the GDR.^{103a}

(b1)
(a3)
(a5)

Herter, obviously astonished at Brentano's negative attitude toward the Working Group report, pointed out that such views as those expressed by Brentano had never been reflected in the discussions of the Working Group. Herter requested that Brentano submit a plan of his own, and the latter accordingly, later in the sessions, submitted a new plan, "Preliminary Steps to the Reunification of Germany." The central feature of this plan was the establishment of a mixed commission to be appointed by the Federal Government and the East German authorities. The Commission

^{103a} The explanation for Brentano's startling conduct at the Foreign Ministers meeting was apparently Chancellor Adenauer's intervention. American officials gathered that Adenauer had learned of the substance of the Working Group Report only after Brentano had departed by boat for the conference in Washington; that the Chancellor had reacted violently and had sent his Foreign Minister a vigorous instruction which was delivered to Brentano upon his arrival in New York; and that Brentano himself, while intending to suggest certain changes in the Report, had not contemplated the kind of drastic assault which Adenauer's instructions forced him to make. Letter from Martin Hillenbrand (American Minister, Embassy Bonn) to the writer, Sept. 8, 1964, top secret.

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would be responsible for drafting an electoral law but would not supervise the elections. Its main activity apparently would be to make proposals for increasing contacts between the two halves of Germany and to study how the human rights articles in the Soviet draft peace treaty could be implemented. Brentano conceded that the plan represented a "maximum program", but he felt that the West must put forward "maximum demands" because meeting the expected maximum requests of the Soviet Union with minimum Western requests might limit the margin of negotiations to the disadvantage of the West. He declared that the Federal Republic would further elaborate its ideas and give them to the Working Group after the Federal Cabinet had approved them.

Discussions Regarding a Peace Treaty, Disarmament, and Berlin. Discussion of the other issues by the Four Foreign Ministers did not reveal as great a cleavage as there had been in the matter of reunification. Yet there were wide differences at various points.

On the question of a peace treaty, Herter felt that the West should not leave the initiative to the Soviet Union and therefore should propose either a draft treaty or a statement of principles. Lloyd favored the first alternative. But Couve was doubtful about discussing a peace treaty, and he declared that most of the issues to be settled by a peace treaty had already been settled between the Western Powers and the Federal Republic, on the one hand, and by the USSR and the GDR, on the other. Only the problems of the military status of Germany and of frontiers remained to be settled, Couve said, and this could not be done as long as there were two Germanies. As for Brentano, he opposed the idea of a peace treaty which went into details, because such a treaty would be to the disadvantage of a future all-German Government. Since he realized that a peace settlement would have to be discussed at the conference, he felt that a statement of principles would be more advantageous. The Foreign Ministers finally agreed that the principles of a peace treaty should be offered and that if these principles were accepted the West would then submit a draft treaty.

The Working Group plan for German reunification and European security had also provided, among other things, for a general reduction of armed forces of the Three Western Powers and the Soviet Union (paragraph 31 of Annex A). This link between general disarmament and German reunification was criticized by the French Foreign Minister, who felt that a distinction must be made between general disarmament and special measures in the field of European

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[security and that it would be a mistake to make progress on reunification dependent on progress in global disarmament.] He suggested that the Western Powers, instead of including proposals for general disarmament in the Western negotiating package, should propose that disarmament discussions, possibly in a United Nations Committee, be held at the same time that reunification was proceeding in stages. After some discussion of this problem, the Foreign Ministers accepted a proposal by Herter to have the Working Group define the relationship between disarmament and reunification. (S) (as)

The Working Group proposals for interim arrangements for Berlin met general approval from the Foreign Ministers, [with the possible exception of Lloyd, who emphasized that the legal basis of the Western position in Berlin was quite unsatisfactory and that the Communists had the power to make it awkward without engaging in any specific hostile acts. He raised the question whether a legal title based upon conquest in 1945 would remain a good title indefinitely, and he wondered whether it would not be wise, from the point of view of public opinion, to offer new arrangements on Berlin "to put the Soviets a little more on the defensive." In this connection he suggested the possibility of using United Nations personnel to supervise new access arrangements. In reply to questions from the other Foreign Ministers, however, Lloyd maintained that new arrangements regarding Berlin need not change the existing basis of Western rights in Berlin nor affect the present NATO guarantee of these rights. The new arrangements could be defined in such a way as to be without prejudice to the position of either the West or the Soviet Union. (S) (as)]

The French Foreign Minister felt that not much needed be said on the subject of Berlin since the city's special status would disappear with the reunification of Germany. The real problem was to find a modus vivendi for Berlin in the absence of reunification. He considered it important that the Western rights were based on conquest and not on agreements with the Soviet Union. Yet he expressed willingness to consider certain adjustments such as limitation of Western forces in Berlin and restriction of some activities, among which he mentioned specifically "the periodic meetings of the Bundestag in Berlin." Couve had serious reservations regarding Lloyd's suggestions that the United Nations should be brought into the Berlin problem, because once the problem was in the hands of the United Nations "it would be difficult to predict what would happen."]

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Brentano agreed with Couve that the legal basis of the Western position in Berlin must continue to rest on the conquest of Germany. Any new agreement with the Soviet Union which changed this legal basis, he said, would result in erosion of the Western position by the technique of Soviet "interpretation". Moreover, a new arrangement with the Soviet Union would require the participation of Soviet Zone authorities. Finally, it would lead to the loss of the NATO guarantee for Berlin, which was valid only on the basis of the existing position.

Acting Secretary Herter, who had voiced considerable doubt that the Western Powers could maintain the legal concept that their rights were based on occupation and at the same time "appear to be giving them up", eventually proposed that the British prepare a paper for the Working Group elaborating their ideas. Meanwhile, the legal experts could consider whether Lloyd's proposal regarding new arrangements was legally feasible.

Instructions to Working Group and Report to NATO Council. At the conclusion of their discussions, the Foreign Ministers adopted an "Agreed Minute" of instructions for the Working Group, which was to meet in London on April 13 and to have a report ready by April 25. The Working Group was to be instructed:

1) To consider how to develop a plan on German reunification on the basis of the proposal made by Brentano and the plan approved by the Working Group in its report of March 21.

2) To consider plans for European security and to study how they could be associated with progress toward reunification.

3) To study the question of linking progress in general disarmament with proposals on German reunification, taking account of the French Foreign Minister's suggestions that the Western Powers might offer to enter discussions on general disarmament linked with various phases of the process of reunification.

4) To draw up general principles of a German peace treaty and develop, "if possible", a draft treaty. Whether a draft treaty would actually be proposed would be a matter for further consideration.

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5) To consider whether some proposal on Berlin should be included as an integral part of the Western Powers' general proposal on the German question and European security.

6) To examine further possible Western proposals on Berlin if the Soviet Union should refuse to discuss a general settlement of the German problem, taking into account a paper to be provided by the United Kingdom.

(b1)
(a5)

In addition to these specific instructions, the Agreed Minute contained an instruction to the Working Group to endeavor to reach agreement on other outstanding details of the comprehensive plan for reunification, European security, a peace settlement, and Berlin, and to make tactical recommendations to guide the Western Foreign Ministers at the anticipated conference with the Soviet Union.

At their final meeting the Four Foreign Ministers also agreed on a report to the NATO Council scheduled to meet in Washington April 2-4. They would inform the Council of their preliminary views, as just concerted. They would also tell the Council that the Quadripartite Working Group had been instructed to prepare an agreed position and tactical plan for the consideration of the Foreign Ministers at their next meeting on April 29.¹⁰⁴

3. NATO Ministerial Meeting, April 2-4

In a review of the world situation at the start of the working session of the NATO Ministerial Meeting, Acting Secretary Herter declared that Western firmness on Berlin must be "categorical" so that the Soviet Union would not risk war over Berlin. But firmness must be matched by willingness to negotiate. Commenting that, in view of the Soviet note of March 30, the negotiations with the

¹⁰⁴US Del. Minutes of Quadripartite Foreign Ministers Meetings, Afternoon Session, Mar. 31, 1959, Morning and Afternoon Sessions, Apr. 1 (USDEL MC-16, USDEL MC-17, USDEL MC-18, all secret); Agreed Minute of Four Foreign Ministers, Apr. 1, 1959, secret; to Bonn, tel. 2297, Apr. 1, 1959, and tel. 2318, Apr. 2, both secret; to all NATO capitals, circular airgram CC 513, Apr. 2, secret; to Bonn, airgram G-440, Apr. 2, secret; Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, p. 442.

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Soviet Union were now certain to be held, he said that the Western Powers would try hard to make the negotiations succeed. However, he asserted, the Western Powers would never agree to unilateral Soviet proposals prejudicing their rights in Berlin.

British Foreign Secretary Lloyd, who presented the preliminary views of the four Western Foreign Ministers on the Western negotiating position, expressed general agreement with Herter's resumé of the world situation. He emphasized, however, that Khrushchev genuinely wanted negotiations and that prospects for these were consequently favorable. With regard to Berlin, Lloyd put considerable stress on the "extremely exposed" Western position in that city and on the belief that the Western rights of occupation in Berlin, while legally sound, were not publicly convincing.]

As on previous occasions, some of the delegates put greater emphasis on the element of firmness in the Western position, others on that of flexibility. This time the latter tendency seemed to predominate.

The Italian Foreign Minister, Giuseppe Pella, urged a settlement of the Berlin problem and suggested that the West should give the impression of sincerely wanting to reach a peaceful solution rather than of being willing to risk war for "procedural matters". The Canadian Delegate, Minister of National Defense Pearkes, reminded the Three Western Powers that, in spite of their undisputed legal rights in Berlin, rights derived from conquest tended to lose their relevance as the years passed. Not every change in Berlin would have to be a change for the worse, he said, urging the NATO Council to study the possibility of a role for the United Nations in Berlin. Belgian Foreign Minister Wigny asserted that a policy of firmness in Berlin need not preclude acceptance of the existence of the GDR and certain Western "adaptions" to this. Foreign Minister Lange of Norway, while definitely rejecting any neutralization of Germany, suggested that the Soviet Union might perhaps be given more far-reaching security guarantees than those contained in the 1955 proposals. He, too, favored new arrangements for Berlin, possibly under United Nations auspices.]

On the other hand, in contrast to Lloyd, French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville pointed out that West Berlin's exposed position made a firm Western response "doubly necessary". The delegates of Greece and Turkey were also more inclined to emphasize the element of firmness than to hope for an accommodation with the Soviet Union.]

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[NATO Secretary General Spaak, noting that there were divergencies between those NATO members directly concerned with Berlin and those which were not, emphasized that the entire NATO organization was involved in Berlin. Spaak also raised the question whether security would have to be tied to reunification in all circumstances and whether the Soviet Union would have to accept the Western "parcel" of proposals all at once or whether there might be "little parcels." With regard to Berlin, Spaak likewise declared that he did not favor emphasizing the right of conquest, especially if the United Nations were involved.]

At the close of the discussions, the NATO Council decided that a resumé of the positions taken by the individual NATO members should be sent to the Working Group scheduled to meet in London in April, so that these views might be taken into account in preparing the Western position. In its communiqué issued on April 4, the NATO Council declared that there was "full agreement on the broad lines of policy to be pursued" and it reaffirmed its declaration on Berlin of December 16, 1958.^{104a}

4. Herter-Brentano Meeting, April 4, 1959

The German Foreign Minister's rejection of the Working Group proposal for German reunification prompted the Secretary to have one more discussion with Brentano, this time without the presence of the other Foreign Ministers. On the American side, Merchant, Bruce, and Hillenbrand also participated; the German Foreign Minister was accompanied by Grewe.

Herter said that he wanted to speak frankly. [The paper presented by Brentano in the quadripartite meeting contained little more than negatives. It was difficult to see how an "attractive package" with appeal to public opinion could be produced on the basis of that paper or how the phased plan could be maintained at all. Herter declared that the main divergence between them seemed to be that the United States was more optimistic with respect to the basic strength of the Federal Republic and that it believed]

^{104a}From USDEL. NATO, circ. tels. 1149, Apr. 3, 1959; 1151, Apr. 3; 1155, Apr. 4; all secret; 1153, Apr. 4, unclassified; Verbatim Record of NATO Council Ministerial Meeting, Afternoon Session, April 2, 1959, Morning and Afternoon Sessions, April 3 (C-VR (59), 13, 14, 15), cosmic top secret.

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[that the West Germans could be expected to withstand Communist blandishments. According to American estimates, the Federal Republic was apparently stronger than its own Government thought it to be.

Brentano conceded that the German paper was negative, but he felt that it was realistic. It was fallacious to emphasize that West Germany through its larger population, flourishing economy, and other advantages must of necessity have the greater attraction with respect to East Germany. Those who believed this did not realize how a monolithic, totalitarian system operated. The present German leaders had lived through a totalitarian regime and knew how incapable a democracy was of resisting a totalitarian drive to power. It was not the Government that was weak but the people. It was not only a question of the 17 million East Germans but also of the Red Army, which was still there. He believed that one spoke too lightly of contacts with East Germany and that the whole structure of the Soviet Zone had changed so completely that any attempts at integration would mean the subversion of West Germany. Perhaps it was correct to say that the Federal Republic underestimated its strength, but this was better than to overestimate it. The Federal Republic had a great responsibility toward the 50 million West Germans and had to consider carefully what commitments it could afford. Brentano revealed in this connection one of the underlying, though rarely expressed, reasons for the Federal Government's attitude on reunification when he stated that the fact could not be overlooked that a great part of the opposition in the Federal Republic favored "undemocratic socialism" and that the possibility of a coalition between the opposition party and Communist elements in the GDR might result in a loss of control of developments in Germany. The Social Democrats, after all, had not forgotten that Karl Marx was a "common grandfather."

(b1)
(b2)

When Herter asked how Brentano envisaged long-range solutions to the existing situation if the Federal Republic feared the possibility of a coalition between the SPD and East German elements, the German Foreign Minister replied that it would be better to preserve the status quo for some time than to change it by entering into risks that were not calculable.

Herter concluded from this that the Federal Republic basically did not appear to want reunification, since it could not foresee any conditions that would make it attractive. This created difficulties for the United States, which had supported the German position for years and had asserted that the Berlin problem could

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be solved only in the context of the general German problem. The West would now be confined to dealing only with Berlin. Herter felt that the Soviet Union would win a bloodless victory of the first order if the Western Powers indicated that they did not want any political changes.

Obviously aiming to prevent a repetition of Brentano's performance at the quadripartite meetings, Bruce pointed out that the Working Group scheduled to meet in London would not be able to report to the Ministers unless the delegations were clearly instructed and that it was bad to have the German Delegation join in drafting papers only to have these papers subsequently repudiated by its own Government. The Working Group must have some latitude in drawing up its proposals so that the problems could be resolved. Otherwise the Western Powers would come to the conference in a disorganized fashion and the Soviet Union would exploit their differences. 1

(b1)
(AS)

Grewe drew from these statements the conclusion that the Federal Republic would have to put forward concrete proposals which would fit into the stages of the reunification process. Herter concurred and encouraged the Germans to produce something along these lines.¹⁰⁵

H. London Working Group Sessions, April 13-23

1. Attitudes of the Delegations

The Working Group convened for its London meetings on April 13, with Hillenbrand again heading the United States Delegation. This series of meetings continued until April 23.

At an early stage the United States Delegation felt that, in view of the extremely cautious position of the Germans and French on reunification, there was little prospect of restoring the major elements of the original United States proposals, i.e., those embodied in the Working Group paper of March 21. It hoped, however, to preserve the framework of the phased plan and to include a few novel features.

(b1)
(AS)

¹⁰⁵Memorandum (USDEL/MC/11) by Hillenbrand (EUR) of conversation among Herter, von Brentano, and others, Apr. 4, 1959, secret.

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The Delegation noted that the "attitude of timidity and lack of self-confidence" of West German officials with respect to the GDR, as expressed by Brentano to Herter, was an inhibiting factor in London, too. Likewise noticeable was a fear of contacts with the East Germans and a strong distrust of the SPD, with the CDU insisting on safeguards against any possible combination of SPD and East Zone elements. The United States Delegation also stated that the Germans, after the repudiation by their own Government of the proposals they had made in Paris, were "extremely cautious" and were dependent on almost daily instructions from Bonn, from where major points could be referred by direct wire to Adenauer, who was vacationing in Italy. (b)(1) (a)(5)

As for the French, they did not produce any surprises, and they frequently ended up "at the same point as the Germans, though sometimes for different reasons." The French throughout reacted most unfavorably toward any suggestion that the United Nations might play a significant role in Berlin.

The British were at first somewhat "reticent" but revealed more of their thinking in the course of the proceedings. They admitted "privately" that they had general instructions to accept any proposal by other delegations which "seems to find general concurrence."¹⁰⁶

2. "Phased Plan for German Reunification, European Security and a German Peace Settlement"

Despite the difficulties, the Working Group successfully moved forward, not only through general discussions but also through rather technical discussions on specific matters. No attempt will be made here to follow these discussions through the various stages. On April 23, the Working Group completed its report and submitted it to the Governments.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶From London, tel. 5340, Apr. 15, 1959, and tel. 5447, Apr. 19, both secret.

¹⁰⁷Western Foreign Ministers Meeting, Paris, April 29-May 2, 1959, "Report of the Four Power Working Group, London, April 13-23, 1959" (PFM REF-1/105), Apr. 24, 1959, secret. The report included the following documents: 1) A revision of the "Phased Plan for German Reunification and European Security and a German Peace Settlement"; 2) "Preliminary Draft Principles of a German Peace Settlement"; 3) "Berlin"; 4) "Tactics at a Foreign Ministers' Conference"; 5) "A statement to the North Atlantic Council".

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The heart of the Working Group report was, of course, the "Phased Plan", which, after it was reviewed and amended by the Four Western Foreign Ministers at their meetings of April 29-30, became the Western peace plan as presented at the conference with the Soviet Union in May. The following summary of the essential features of the plan as developed by the Working Group may help the reader in following the evolution of the plan, particularly through the last decisive stage of review by the Foreign Ministers.

The plan provided for parallel steps to be taken in four successive stages in the fields of German reunification and European security. In Stage I, as a first step toward reunification, a quadripartite commission was to be established by the United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union to supervise implementation of the "Phased Plan" and to settle disputes prior to reunification and a peace settlement. As regards security, the Four Powers would set up consultative arrangements and would issue a joint declaration binding them to settle international disputes by peaceful means and to refrain from the use of force. The four Powers would also initiate a discussion of staged, controlled, and comprehensive disarmament measures. Also, they would undertake not to station IRBM's in Germany, Poland, or Czechoslovakia. (b)(1)
(2)

The principal development in the field of reunification in Stage II would be the establishment of a mixed all-German committee. This committee, consisting of 15 representatives appointed by the Federal Republic and 5 appointed by the East German authorities, would have the task of formulating proposals to expand contacts and the free movement of ideas, goods, and persons between the two parts of Germany, and to ensure human rights in East and West Germany. Above all, it would have the task of drafting a law for free and secret elections which would eventually be submitted to a plebiscite in both parts of Germany.

In the sphere of security, the four Powers during Stage II would reduce their forces to specific maximum limits and would place into storage depots, under international supervision, specific quantities of designated types of armaments. The four Powers would also agree on measures of inspection and observation against surprise attack, including a zone of ground inspection in Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. Finally, upon establishment of an effective inspection system, the ban on manufacture of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, now accepted by the Federal Republic, would be extended to cover all of Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.

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The Stage III measures with regard to reunification were to include election of an all-German assembly not later than two and a half years after signature of the East-West agreement; the draft-
int of an all-German constitution; and the formation on the basis of this constitution of an all-German government to replace the existing governments in the two parts of Germany. Pending the signing of a peace treaty with an all-German Government, the four Powers would retain only those rights which related to "the stationing of armed forces in Germany, the protection of their security, Berlin and the peace settlement".

With respect to security in Stage III, the four Powers, upon formation of an all-German government, would establish in the territories of a reunified Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, an agreed balance between the non-indigenous forces on both sides, on condition that after conclusion of a peace treaty no party would station forces in any country in that zone without the consent of the country involved and would withdraw its forces upon request of that country. Also, upon establishment of an all-German government, agreed ceilings for the armed forces of a reunified Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia would be put in effect. Furthermore, in case an all-German government adhered to any collective security pact, there might be special security arrangements for the area closest to the frontiers between a reunified Germany and the member states of another security pact. Lastly, there would be further limitations in the size of the forces of the Four Powers below the level contemplated in Stage II as well as negotiations regarding still further reductions. These measures should be harmonized with plans for general disarmament. (b)(1) (u.s.)

For Stage IV the plan simply provided that a final peace settlement would be concluded with an all-German government and that the treaty would be signed by all states which had been at war with Germany.

3. Working Group Proposals on Berlin

With respect to Berlin, the Working Group felt that Western public opinion would not regard as sufficiently positive any suggestions that the four Powers should "simply" agree not to change the status quo in Berlin during the interim period when the "Phased Plan" was being carried out. The Working Group therefore suggested that the "Phased Plan" should include a reference to Berlin and that this reference should consist of one of two alternative proposals between which the Working Group had been unable to make a choice.

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The first of these proposals called for free elections in both parts of Berlin under United Nations supervision, coupled with a plebiscite to determine whether and, if so, which foreign troops should remain in Berlin. The GDR capital should be removed from Berlin; pending German reunification and the signing of a peace treaty, the four Powers should guarantee the continued presence of such foreign troops as might be approved by plebiscite and should guarantee free access to Berlin.

The second alternative proposal was to the effect that, pending reunification of Germany and restoration of Berlin as its capital, the four Powers should agree not to alter existing arrangements regarding access to Berlin. This would be coupled with an offer to negotiate separate agreements with the Soviet Union regarding refugees, "inflammatory" propaganda activities, and levels of military forces in the city.

If the Soviet Union, by rejecting the "Phased Plan" for a general German settlement, should force the Western Powers to negotiate an interim Berlin settlement, the following Working Group proposals should be considered:

A. That free elections be held under quadripartite or United Nations supervision throughout Berlin for the formation of a Berlin city council. This would be a first step toward a reunified Germany of which Berlin would be the capital and would eliminate East Berlin as the capital of the GDR. The freedom and integrity of a united Berlin and access thereto would be guaranteed by the four Powers, which would continue to station troops in Berlin. Subject to the supreme authority of the four Powers under a "Vienna type" veto provision,^{107a} the freely elected Berlin city council would be free to administer the city.

^{107a}The reference is to the Control Agreement for Austria signed June 28, 1946, according to article 6 of which legislative measures adopted by the Austrian Government, with the exception of constitutional laws, became effective 31 days after submission to the Allied Council unless they were disapproved by the Allied Council. Since all decisions of the Allied Council had to be unanimous according to article 12 of the Control Agreement, a unanimous veto by the Allied Council was necessary to nullify Austrian legislation. For text, see Gazette of the Allied Commission for Austria, No. 7, supplement, June 1946.

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B. If proposal A were rejected, the Western Powers should agree to the Soviet Government's turning over control of access routes to GDR personnel, provided the Soviet Government informed the Western Governments in writing that the GDR was acting as "agent" for the Soviet Government. The Western Powers should offer in this connection to negotiate with the Soviet Union an agreement defining the ways in which freedom of access would be maintained; this agreement would have to be signed by the Soviet Union, not by the GDR. Such an agreement would also have to enable the Western Powers to fulfill all their existing obligations toward the people of Berlin. Furthermore, there would have to be an explicit statement that the agreement would remain in force until Germany was reunified unless it was altered by further quadripartite arrangements. Finally, the agreement would have to be registered with the United Nations.

C. If solution B were rejected, the Western Powers should "explore" with the Soviet Union a solution along the following lines:

The Western Powers, while fully asserting their rights in Berlin as well as the obligations of the Soviet Union in relation to the Western presence in Berlin and freedom of access to the city, would declare their willingness to make an arrangement with the Soviet Union on the following terms:

1) The East German authorities or the Soviet Union would issue a declaration that there would be no deviation from existing procedures regarding Allied military traffic to Berlin and that they would be governed by the four Power communiqué of June 20, 1949¹⁰⁸ with respect to civilian traffic.

2) If the foregoing declaration should be issued by the East German authorities, the Soviet Union would associate itself with it.

¹⁰⁸Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 94-95.

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3) The four Powers would publicly declare that they would not use or threaten force to overthrow existing arrangements regarding the government or administration of Berlin. Separate declarations to the same effect would be made by the Federal Republic and the GDR.

4) The four Powers would conclude an agreement whereby a United Nations Special Representative and a limited number of United Nations observers would be established in Berlin to confirm that existing access procedures were being maintained. (It is noteworthy that the Working Group report strongly emphasized at this point that the United Nations would not assume any responsibility for Western access rights and that the United Nations observers would play no part in arbitrating disputes or enforcing Western rights.)

5) The arrangements might include provisions enabling the United Nations observers to assume certain responsibilities in respect to refugees to West Berlin and West Germany, as, for example, to confirm that the refugees abstained from "improper" activities while in West Berlin refugee camps and that they were not used for intelligence and propaganda in the Berlin area.

6) The four Powers could declare their intention not to engage in "inflammatory" propaganda activities in East and West Berlin.

7) The three Western Powers could undertake not to station forces in excess of a given number in Berlin. This level of forces might be "very slightly" below the existing level although this might have "certain psychological disadvantages."

D. If solution C were rejected, the Western Powers should state that they intended to maintain the rights which they then had in respect of Berlin and access thereto and that they trusted that the Soviet Union would not attempt to interfere with the exercise of these rights.

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4. Unresolved Questions

In submitting its report to the Foreign Ministers, the Working Group stated that, while it had reached identity of views to a large degree, there were, nevertheless, certain questions regarding which an agreed directive from the Foreign Ministers had to be obtained. The principal unresolved questions in the field of security and disarmament concerned the relationship between general disarmament, on the one hand, and European security and German reunification, on the other, particularly the problem of how general disarmament should be introduced into the "Phased Plan". There was also the related question as to whether provisions for general measures against surprise attack should allow for alternative proposals limited to Europe with ground inspection limited to a small area in Europe. Other questions left unresolved were whether the stationing of Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles in a defined area in Europe should be prohibited and whether Hungary should be included along with Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia in a special security area in Europe.]

With respect to Berlin, the main unresolved problems were, first, whether proposals on Berlin should be put forward as part of the "Phased Plan"; secondly, whether the Western Powers, with respect to an interim solution, could accept anything going beyond the "agency theory", especially solution C; thirdly, what forms of participation by the United Nations could be contemplated by the Western Powers.

I. Paris Foreign Ministers Meeting, April 29-30

At their meeting in Paris, April 29-30, the Western Foreign Ministers reviewed the report produced by the Working Group. The members of the Working Group also convened in Paris and in the course of the Foreign Ministers' deliberations received instructions to redraft certain portions of the report in accordance with the consensus achieved at the meetings.

At the outset Secretary Herter¹⁰⁹ declared that the unsettled questions must be resolved swiftly and that the Western Powers must not go to Geneva on Soviet terms with the discussion limited

¹⁰⁹ Herter was appointed Secretary of State on Apr. 18 following the resignation of Secretary Dulles on Apr. 15.

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to the Berlin crisis. The Western "package" therefore had to be sufficiently attractive to secure support throughout the world; it should be "indissoluble" and contain proposals for an improvement in the Western position in Berlin.

1. Discussion of the "Phased Plan"

Except for minor points, the Working Group proposals on reunification were accepted by the Foreign Ministers. After Herter, Couve de Murville, and Lloyd had pointed out that the composition of the all-German committee as proposed in paragraph 7 of the "Phased Plan" was "too heavily weighted against the East Germans" to appeal to public opinion, Brentano agreed to the suggestion that the membership of the committee should be raised to 25 for the Federal Republic and 10 for the GDR, with a 3/4 majority required for decisions. The Foreign Ministers also directed the Working Group to eliminate any implication in the draft that the committee might "stand above the Government of the Federal Republic".

The principal objection to the Working Group report was raised by the German side in the field of security, and it was made clear that these objections represented the position of Chancellor Adenauer and the West German Government. Although the Federal Republic agreed with the principle of security zones against surprise attack, it could not accept a more limited zone restricted to Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and, possibly, Hungary. Such an arrangement would have profound political, military, and psychological disadvantages and would place Germany under a special status in NATO. It would also entail withdrawal of important types of defense installations from Germany and amount to discrimination against that country. Brentano stated, however, that any inspection systems involving wide geographic areas would be acceptable and suggested adoption of the "Geneva formula" regarding areas of comparable size, importance, and depth on both sides of the line of demarcation between a reunited Germany and Eastern European countries.¹¹⁰ He referred likewise to the

¹¹⁰The reference is to the "Western Proposal on German Reunification and European Security", submitted at the Geneva meeting of Foreign Ministers, October 27, 1955; Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 192-195.

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proposals made in 1957 for inspection against surprise attack in a zone extending to 60 degrees East longitude or, at any rate, extending far into Soviet territory. ¹¹¹

On similar grounds Brentano rejected the prohibition of manufacture of ABC (atomic, biological, and chemical) weapons in all of Germany and the ban on stationing Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles in a security area consisting of all of Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia (paragraphs 17 and 18 of the "Phased Plan"). The German Foreign Minister vigorously opposed any definition of a special security area in "Rapacki Plan terms" and any "discriminatory provisions" calculated to give Germany a "special status in NATO."

The British Foreign Minister made the strongest criticism of Brentano's position; he said that, if Brentano's recommendations concerning the security features of the "Phased Plan" were accepted, the only security provision left in Stage II would be the one pertaining to exchange of information (paragraph 13). Stage II, accordingly, would remain "devoid of significant security provisions," and the public appeal of the Western package would be reduced. Lloyd conceded, however, that a permanent commitment not to station IRBMs in Germany might be unwise; he accepted Brentano's argument that such a provision might induce other countries to cancel their NATO commitments. (u)
(a5)

In deciding on the changes in the "Phased Plan", the Foreign Ministers resolved that areas in which measures of inspection and observation against surprise attack were to be undertaken would be defined, not by political boundaries, but rather as "such geographic areas throughout the world as may be agreed by the four Powers and other states concerned." Thus the Foreign Ministers met Brentano's principal objection in this matter even though they did not follow his suggestion that these areas be defined in terms of the 1957 disarmament proposals. In compliance with the West German Foreign Minister's wishes, the Foreign Ministers also revised that provision of the "Phased Plan" which stipulated that, 1

¹¹¹ The reference is to the Western Working Paper, "Systems of Inspection to Safeguard Against the Possibility of Surprise Attack", submitted to the Disarmament Subcommittee, Aug. 2, 1957. See Documents on Disarmament, 1945-1959 (Department of State publication 7008), II, 837-839.

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upon establishment of an all-German government the four Powers would agree on establishing an agreed balance between the non-indigenous forces on both sides "in the territories of a reunified Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia" (paragraph 26). Brentano had objected that this formulation sounded too much like the area of the Rapacki Plan and that its acceptance would be the first step toward the neutralization of Germany. After protracted discussions up to the final stage of the conference, the Foreign Ministers finally adopted language proposed by Herter which stated that

the Four Powers and other such countries as are directly concerned would agree that in a zone comprising areas of comparable size and depth and importance on either side of a mutually determined line agreed ceilings of indigenous and non-indigenous forces would be put into effect.¹¹²

One other major dissent from the Working Group draft of the "Phased Plan" was also settled by the Foreign Ministers. Couve de Murville had objected to the specific ceiling for France's armed forces under paragraph 14 of the "Phased Plan." The Foreign Ministers accepted Herter's proposal that the ceilings of armed forces be expressed in general terms, with specific totals given for the United States and the USSR.

2. Discussion of the Berlin Proposals

The close link between the problems of European security and German reunification and the problem of Berlin had been given a special emphasis by the Working Group recommendation that there should be a reference to the Berlin problem in the "Phased Plan".

¹¹² A note appended to this revised paragraph in the definitive text of the "Phased Plan" suggested that the Western Powers should declare in reply to a possible Soviet request at Geneva for clarification that they had in mind ceilings with respect to a reunified Germany of the kind indicated in the Paris Agreements of Oct. 23, 1954, "concerning the limitation of forces of the Federal Republic." For text of the pertinent documents, "Protocol No. II on Forces of Western European Union" and "Protocol No. III on the Control of Armaments", both signed Oct. 23, 1954, see Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 159-167.

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There was general agreement among the Foreign Ministers that the "Phased Plan" should contain a proposal on Berlin and that the first of the Working Group's two alternative proposals on Berlin should be adopted, that which called for the unification of East and West Berlin through free elections. Couve de Murville and Brentano expressed reservations, however, regarding other parts of that proposal, including the Working Group's recommendations for a plebiscite on the presence of foreign troops and for the removal of the GDR capital from Berlin. The Foreign Ministers eventually decided that a Berlin proposal along the lines of the Working Group recommendation but omitting the points objected to by Couve de Murville and Brentano would be incorporated into Stage I of the "Phased Plan". The Foreign Ministers also decided that the second alternative, which was essentially a proposal to maintain the status quo in Berlin with certain possible accommodations, could be a fall-back position for a discussion with the Soviet Union at the conference in the context of the "Phased Plan" but that it would not be included in the plan itself.

In discussing the Working Group recommendations for an interim solution for Berlin in case of a Soviet rejection of the "Phased Plan", Secretary Herter emphasized that it would be dangerous if the public got the impression "through leaks" that the Foreign Ministers had agreed on a fall-back position separate from the over-all solution of the "Phased Plan". It would therefore be more advisable for the Foreign Ministers to reserve discussion of an interim Berlin solution for the Geneva meeting in the light of the situation that might develop there. The other Foreign Ministers concurred in this suggestion, and it was decided to remove discussion of a fall-back position from the Western position paper. The Foreign Ministers, furthermore, agreed that the Berlin proposal contained in the "Phased Plan" would be the initial Western offer outside the framework of the "package".

3. Other Discussions

The Foreign Ministers discussion of the Working Group paper, "Preliminary Draft Principles of a German Peace Treaty", involved mainly matters of language. The drafting subgroup was given directives for certain changes in this respect.

With respect to the Working Group paper on "Tactics", a good deal of the discussion revolved around the question whether the Western proposals should be published in advance of the conference. Neither Couve de Murville nor Lloyd nor Brentano saw any

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advantage in a prior publication of the Western proposals. Moreover, the British Foreign Secretary and the West German Foreign Minister stressed that expected criticism of the plan by the domestic opposition in their countries might be helpful to the Soviet Union. Secretary Herter, who was more favorably inclined toward prior publication as he felt that the West could thereby take the initiative and put the burden for rejection on the Soviet Union, eventually accepted the position of the other Foreign Ministers in this matter in view of the internal political difficulties in the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic.

Regarding the participation of Czechoslovakia and Poland in the conference, the Foreign Ministers accepted the Working Group proposal, namely, that the Western Powers should try to avoid it but that if they had to accept it they would insist on Italian participation. As for German participation, Herter recalled that the Soviet Union had agreed to the formula proposed in the Western notes of March 26.

Finally, the Foreign Ministers agreed that following the issuance of the communiqué about their meeting they would not put out any statements until the opening of the Geneva conference on May 11.

In this manner the London Working Group report was revised by the Western Foreign Ministers in their meetings of April 29-30. So revised, the report became the definitive statement of the Western position which the United States, Great Britain, and France were prepared to present at the conference with the Soviet Union at Geneva.¹¹³

¹¹³From Paris, tels. SECTO 11, Apr. 29, 1959; SECTO 12, Apr. 29; SECTO 13, Apr. 29; SECTO 16, Apr. 30; all secret; SECTO 17, Apr. 30, unclassified; US Del. Minutes of the Western Foreign Ministers Meeting, Paris, Afternoon Session, Apr. 30 (USDEL/MC/9), secret; "The Outline of a Phased Plan for German Reunification, European Security and a German Peace Settlement", Project définitif, Apr. 30, 1959, top secret (très secret); Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 448-449.

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CHAPTER III

BERLIN CONTINGENCY PLANNING, JANUARY-APRIL 1959

A. Tripartite Talks and American Decisions on Contingency Planning, Washington, January 1959

1. Tripartite Ambassadorial Talks

During the months in which the Western Powers hammered out a common position for the expected conference with the Soviet Union, the three Powers with primary responsibility for Berlin continued to coordinate their plans for countering any actual Soviet transfer to East Germany of the Soviet functions with respect to Allied access to Berlin. For the West felt by no means certain that the conference with the Soviet Union would materialize or, if it did, that it would remove the threat to the Western position in Berlin. Moreover, the strength of the Western position depended to a large degree on the credibility of Western determination and unity of purpose in resisting interference with the right of access to Berlin.

As already described in chapter I, Britain and France, at the tripartite Foreign Ministers meeting in Paris on December 14, 1958, had largely agreed to the American proposals of December 11 for revised contingency planning.¹¹⁴ But they had been unwilling to accept section D, which called for the use of limited military force to demonstrate Western determination to maintain surface access. The Three Powers had therefore agreed to discuss the question further at the Ambassadorial level in Washington. Accordingly, Deputy Under Secretary Robert Murphy, British Ambassador Sir Harold Caccia, and French Ambassador Hervé Alphand, and various aides, held talks on January 5 and 13, 1959.

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(a1)
(a5)

The discussions in these tripartite meetings revolved mainly around the concept of the use of "limited military force". The]

(b1)
(a1)

¹¹⁴Ante, pp. 24-25. For earlier tripartite and U.S. planning with regard to ground access, see Headquarters United States Army, Europe, The U.S. Army in Berlin 1945-1961 (U), (USAREUR No. AG TS 2-102), top secret, pp. 62-68.

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United States pressed for an agreement that blocking of ground access to Berlin would be met by limited force on the ground; it stated that the basic decision to use force at the first attempt to impede Allied access must be taken at this time even though the extent of force and the implementation of the decision would depend on circumstances. The British, on the other hand, asserted that the statement that force would be used to meet a challenge to ground access was an operational plan rather than a statement of principles. The British, and also the French, were opposed to any advance commitment regarding the use of force on the ground, and the British, in particular, indicated that the response to the blocking of ground access might be in the form of an airlift. This notion was vigorously opposed by the Americans, who pointed out that the Soviet Union would take a tougher position if it thought that the West was ready to resort to an airlift. Murphy, in particular, emphasized that the airlift of 1948 had been a great mistake and an evasion of the issue in the face of the Soviet challenge on the ground.¹¹⁵

(b)
(a1)
(a5)

Following these somewhat inconclusive tripartite discussions, the French Ambassador called on Murphy on January 15 and proposed a new formulation of paragraph D which had been drafted by the French Foreign Office. Murphy felt, however, that the new, French version still did not meet the specific need to show determination to maintain the Western right of land access to Berlin.¹¹⁶

2. Proposals by the Department of Defense

Meanwhile, decisions regarding contingency planning were being taken within the United States Government. On January 15 Secretary of Defense McElroy forwarded to Dulles recommendations for action made by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In his covering memorandum McElroy emphasized that the Joint Chiefs agreed with him that a firm political decision should precede military planning and that this decision should embody such principles as the following: (a) That a challenge to surface access to Berlin shall be

¹¹⁵Memorandum by McKiernan (EUR) of meetings of American, British, and French officials on Berlin contingency planning, January 5 and 13, both secret.

¹¹⁶Memorandum by Hillenbrand (EUR) of conversation between Murphy and Alphant, Jan. 15, 1949, secret.

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met by military action on the ground; (b) that "we will not evade the issue" by establishing an air lift; (c) that the challenge will be met where it occurs--in the air or on the ground or both; and (d) that the United States will be prepared to "follow-up initial actions with increasing measures of military force" and will "accept the risk of general war." The Secretary of Defense also expressed agreement with the recommendation by the Joint Chiefs that General Norstad should be responsible for planning and implementing "such military actions as would be taken in Europe."

The enclosed memorandum by the Joint Chiefs listed a number of necessary preparatory measures to be taken by the West before the expected assumption of control functions by GDR personnel on May 27, the date of expiration of the original Soviet "ultimatum". Following the transfer of control functions, the Joint Chiefs suggested, a probe of Soviet and East German intentions should be undertaken by dispatching a small motor convoy accompanied by an armed escort of platoon size from West Germany to West Berlin. If this convoy were stopped by force, the Allies would send a formation of division size to reopen the access route to Berlin. The decision to dispatch such a force should be taken in full awareness that "it may lead to further military operations." Preliminary conditions for dispatch of the division would have to include the taking of such actions as evacuating non-combatants from Berlin; putting NATO in a state of readiness for war; and, in the United States, effecting partial mobilization, placing the nation's forces on a state-of-war alert, beginning the dispersal of U.S. Government offices, and putting into effect planned civilian defense measures. ¹¹⁷ 1

(b)
(a)
(a5)

3. White House Decisions

At a White House conference held on January 29, the President, Secretaries Dulles and McElroy, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Twining, arrived at decisions regarding Berlin contingency planning which, while not as far-reaching as the recommendations of the Joint Chiefs, represented adoption of a strong stand by the United States Government. These decisions were as follows:

¹¹⁷Memorandum by Secretary of Defense McElroy for the Secretary of State on the Berlin situation, Jan. 15, 1959, with enclosed memorandum (JCSM-16-59) and Appendices by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense, Jan. 13, all top secret.

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(1) There would be no acquiescence in the substitution of GDR personnel for Soviet officials with respect to the exercise of functions having to do with access by the Western occupying Powers to Berlin. However, mere identification of vehicles to GDR personnel would not be construed as acquiescence as long as there was no stamping of papers by the latter.

(2) Quiet precautionary military measures in West Germany and Berlin which would be detectable by Soviet military intelligence but would not create public alarm should begin between the current date and May 27.

(3) After substitution of GDR officials for Soviet personnel, trucks accompanied by a scout car would attempt to make the transit from Berlin. If there should be physical obstruction by GDR or Soviet elements, the effort would be discontinued, and arms would not be used unless the armed vehicle was fired upon.

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(a1)
(a2)

(4) After such physical obstruction had occurred, transit would be suspended and there would be parallel efforts to increase pressure on the Soviet Union and the GDR through mobilization of world opinion, action in the United Nations, and diplomatic pressure, including withdrawal of the Western Ambassadors from Moscow. Military preparations would be intensified at this point and would include observable measures such as evacuation of dependents from Berlin and possibly West Germany.

(5) The decision to apply further military pressure by use of additional force would be subject to governmental decision in case the foregoing efforts were unsuccessful.

(6) Concurrently with the above-mentioned program, an effort should be made to bring about a Foreign Ministers meeting with the Soviet Union on the various aspects of the German question, the meeting to take place around the middle of April and to provide a cover for the postponement or modification of the Soviet "ultimatum" on Berlin. (Agreement to hold a Foreign Ministers meeting was later reached in notes exchanged by the Western Powers and the Soviet Union, as described in the previous chapter.)

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It was "assumed" at the White House meeting that Allied agreement along these lines would be obtained. If not, the United States position would have to be considered "in the light of the Allied position."¹¹⁸

B. Contingency Plan Discussions During the Secretary's Trip to Europe, February 4-8, 1959

Secretary Dulles' trip to London, Paris, and Bonn in February 1959, while mainly in preparation for the anticipated East-West negotiations,¹¹⁹ provided an opportunity as well for acquainting the Western leaders with American views on Berlin contingency planning.¹²⁰ The trip also enabled Dulles to confer, soon after arriving in London, with General Norstad, who expressed the belief that the British and French would be able to accept the plan of action proposed by the United States.¹²¹

¹¹⁸Memorandum by Dulles of "Conclusions of White House Conference Re Berlin", Jan. 29, 1959, top secret; memorandum by McElroy (Defense) and Herter for the President on Berlin contingency planning, Mar. 17, 1959; both top secret.

¹¹⁹Ante, pp. 46-59.

¹²⁰At the very moment when the Secretary was on his way to Europe, the problem of Allied access to Berlin was highlighted by the Soviet detention of an American convoy travelling from Berlin to West Germany. The detention occurred at the Marienborn checkpoint on the Autobahn on Feb. 2 following American refusal to allow Soviet personnel to check the vehicles for possible "unauthorized persons". This "clear violation of the United States' right of access to Berlin" was protested in an American note handed to the Soviet Foreign Minister on Feb. 4. The incident was eventually settled, in a meeting of the Political Advisers on both sides on Feb. 4, through agreement that the U.S. Political Adviser would confirm to his Soviet opposite number that the trucks actually carried what was stated in the convoy manifest. From Bonn, tel. 1678, Feb. 4, 1959, secret; from Berlin, tel. 667, Feb. 5, confidential; Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, p. 412.

¹²¹Memorandum (SVE/MC-2) by Hillenbrand (EUR) of conference among Dulles, Norstad, and others, at Paris, Feb. 4, 1959, top secret.

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1. London Talks

When Dulles informed Foreign Secretary Lloyd on February 4 of the American position regarding contingency planning, he told him of differences within the United States Government regarding this problem. He stated that he himself doubted the wisdom of starting right away with far-reaching military preparations, as some had suggested, and that he opposed measures such as evacuation of dependents and partial mobilization, which would disturb the public and, moreover, would seem premature unless there had been some overt Soviet action. Instead, Dulles favored preliminary military measures which Soviet intelligence might pick up but which would not attract public attention.

Dulles strongly emphasized that the Western Powers must not accept the substitution of GDR officials at the checkpoints, as this would constitute "crossing the Rubicon" and would inevitably lead to acceptance of the authority of the GDR. The Secretary also put great stress on the fact that the three Western Allies were in Berlin as victors in World War II. In discussing the proposed plan of action, Dulles drew attention to the American concept that, if a military convoy were effectively prevented from proceeding, no further effort would be made at that point and one would then move into the second "double-barrelled phase of political offensive and military preparation." In this connection, Dulles expressed strong dislike of Lloyd's suggestion that the Allies should keep the idea of an airlift in reserve; he stated that the situation in Berlin in 1959 was quite different from that in 1948, even apart from the Soviet Union's greater capability for jamming Allied radar. (u) (a5)

In his conversation with the British Prime Minister, the Secretary pointed out that the United States proposals for contingency planning represented the "most moderate program that the United States would find acceptable" and that they fell "considerably short" of the recommendations of the Department of Defense and of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. If American public opinion should receive the impression that the Soviet Union gained a considerable victory in Berlin as a result of pressures by America's allies, the reaction might be serious and "affect our NATO posture."

Macmillan and Lloyd finally agreed that Dulles should present to the French and Germans the line of action which he had proposed. But in the course of the discussions the British again indicated

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a willingness to accept "routine stamping" of identity documents on the basis of the "agency" theory. Dulles reaffirmed his view that no stamping of papers by GDR personnel ought to be accepted unless the Soviet Union clearly specified that the GDR personnel was acting in the capacity of Soviet agents. In reporting this discussion, Dulles wondered whether the British "wholly accepted" his views in the matter.¹²² Later on, in his talks in Paris, Dulles confided to the French that, in spite of agreement with the British on a course of action, he was not sure there would not be "some subsequent slippage" and that the British, in view of their inclination to accept more than just identification of vehicles by GDR personnel, were "perhaps slightly soft about getting into a position which could be interpreted as de facto recognition of the GDR."

2. Talks in Paris and Bonn

In Paris, Dulles again presented the American views on contingency planning. As he had done in London, he emphasized that acceptance of GDR personnel at the checkpoints would mean abandonment of the basic principle that "our victor's rights in Berlin can not be handed over by the Soviets to the vanquished."

Couve de Murville declared that the French in general agreed with the American approach and also held it essential that the Western Powers should retain their rights derived from the German surrender. Freedom of communications with Berlin was an integral part of these rights. The French Foreign Minister also concurred in a suggestion advanced by the Secretary that, if the Soviet Union wanted to designate GDR officials as their agents, this could be discussed.

President de Gaulle likewise agreed with the Secretary that the Soviet Union could not be permitted to turn over to "the vanquished" the rights which the Western Powers had acquired as victors and that any attempt to interfere with their communications must be met by force. But de Gaulle--and likewise Premier Debré--had serious reservations regarding the American proposal

¹²²From London, tel. SECTO 4, Feb. 5, 1959, secret; memorandum (SVE/MC-12) by Dulles of conversation with Macmillan, Feb. 5, top secret; from Paris, tel. SECTO 13, Feb. 5, secret.

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that, if Allied access to Berlin were physically obstructed, the matter should be brought before the United Nations. De Gaulle saw little advantage in bringing the matter up in the Security Council or the General Assembly, and predicted that the United Nations would send Hammarskjold to Berlin, with the end effect that the United Nations would be substituted for the Allies in Berlin.

Dulles explained that one of the reasons for not forcing passage to Berlin immediately (in the event of a blockade) was that certain military preparations would have to be made in advance and that this would not be politically advisable. Furthermore, a delay would enable the Western Powers to obtain support from world public opinion and to demonstrate that they were merely defending their rights. When Debré suggested that it might be preferable to react to a challenge immediately through an airlift, Dulles replied that an airlift might "whittle away our determination to force our way on land." Dulles, however, indicated his willingness to review the proposals concerning taking the matter to the United Nations General Assembly if it appeared that there would be an adverse vote. He did not believe that "our clearly established rights should be permitted to depend on U.N. approval."

In a final conversation with Dulles, Couve de Murville stressed that the only significant difference in their views was that he favored a quick reaction with military force to any Soviet and GDR interference with access to Berlin and that he did not believe that this required any prior mobilization measures. He pointed to the French failure to react quickly to the German occupation of the demilitarized zone in the Rhineland in 1936 as a result of wrong military advice concerning the need for prior mobilization.¹²³

In Bonn, Dulles gave Adenauer an account of Berlin contingency planning and informed the Chancellor about his talks with the British and French, stating that the French were prepared to accept the general line of his policy and that "the British did

¹²³From Paris, tels. SECTO 14, Feb. 6, 1959; SECTO 17, Feb. 6; both secret; memorandum by Dulles (SVE/MC-14) of conversation with Couve, at Orly Airport, Feb. 7, secret.

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so haltingly". Adenauer declared that the American policy of contingency planning was correct and that he and his Government would support it.¹²⁴

C. Establishment of General Norstad's
Special Planning Staff (LIVE OAK)

As the Allied political discussions proceeded on contingency planning, General Norstad began planning for such military operations as might become necessary in accordance with the assignment given to him by the Department of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. On February 18, 1959, he established at the Headquarters of United States Army in Europe "a small concealed US-only group" as a nucleus "for any tripartite staff I might have to form" and to consider military problems connected with access to Berlin. On February 19 Norstad approached the British NATO Permanent Representative regarding British participation in that group, and in March he took a similar initiative with the French. After British and French participation was eventually achieved, Norstad proposed to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on March 17 that a small tripartite staff of about 20 officers be set up at his headquarters in Paris for the purpose of planning military measures in case of interference with Allied access to Berlin.

General Norstad's recommendation was accepted. He therefore set up, as he indicated on April 14, a special tripartite staff under the direct supervision of General Palmer, Deputy U.S. Commander in Chief, Europe, and designated as the immediate directors of activity a British Major General and a French Brigadier General who might also serve as national representatives. The code name chosen for this planning staff was LIVE OAK.¹²⁵

¹²⁴From Bonn, tel. SECTO 24, Feb. 8, 1959, secret; memorandum (SVE/MC-15) by Merchant (EUR) of conversation among Dulles, Adenauer, Brentano, and others, Feb. 8, top secret.

¹²⁵Msg, EC 9-10240, Norstad to JCS, Feb. 23, 1959, top secret; from Paris, tel. 3075, Feb. 25, top secret; Msg, ALO 284, USCINCEUR (Norstad) to Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, Mar. 17, 1959, top secret; to Bonn, tel. 2166, Mar. 18, top secret; Msg, JCS 956632, Mar. 20, 1959, top secret. [For a detailed account of United States military planning and organization for a Berlin contingency, see Dr. H. Lumpkin, LIVE OAK: A Study in Thirty Months of Combined Planning, February 1959-September 1961, (Headquarters United States European Command, EURCOM TS SER 4804), top secret, ch. I.

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D. Continued Ambassadorial and Intragovernmental Discussions
on Contingency Plans, Washington, February-March 1959

1. Tripartite Ambassadorial Talks

During and after Dulles' European discussions on contingency planning, tripartite discussions to develop a detailed common policy continued in Washington among Deputy Under Secretary Murphy and the British and French Ambassadors. On February 18 the Department handed the two Ambassadors a memorandum stating that a revision of Berlin contingency planning on the basis of the American memorandum of December 11, 1958 would be facilitated by a more precise description of the measures to be taken in case of Soviet withdrawal from responsibilities for Berlin access. Therefore, agreement should be reached on the following, more detailed plan of action (which was based on the White House directives of January 29):

(1) Precautionary military measures which would not create public alarm but would be detectable by Soviet intelligence.

(2) Following Soviet withdrawal from the checkpoints, a probe undertaken by an allied convoy accompanied by an armed vehicle; identification of the vehicles to GDR personnel would be allowed but not the stamping of papers.

(3) Possible substitution of tripartite personnel for the Soviet personnel withdrawn from the checkpoints.

(4) In case the initial probe by convoy was obstructed surface traffic by the Three Powers to be suspended and increased pressure to be exerted on the Soviet Union and the GDR through mobilization of world opinion, reference of the matter to the United Nations, and possible recall of the Three Ambassadors from Moscow; also, intensified military preparations, including observable measures such as evacuation of dependents from Berlin and West Germany.

(5) A decision by the Three Governments on whether to apply further military pressure through use of additional force in case the foregoing measures were not sufficient to restore access to Berlin.

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The Department also suggested, in its memorandum, that the allied attitude toward GDR personnel at the checkpoints should be defined more precisely with regard to the "agency" problem, i.e., the acceptance of GDR personnel if authorized by the USSR to function as its agents, and the problem of identification of vehicles of the Three Powers to GDR personnel. There would be no objection, the memorandum indicated, to mere identification procedures not involving the stamping of papers; the Three Embassies at Bonn should, accordingly, determine appropriate procedures for the identification of vehicles and should incorporate them in their instructions for Allied personnel travelling on the Autobahn.¹²⁶

Caccia and Alphand, who made preliminary comments when the memorandum was handed to them, communicated the views of their Governments to Murphy ten days later, on February 28. The substantive suggestions advanced by the two Ambassadors, and the reactions to them, were as follows:

The French Ambassador felt that recourse to the United Nations as a means of mobilizing world opinion against the Soviet Union might result in a United Nations involvement in the Berlin problem. After Caccia and Murphy likewise raised some questions as to the feasibility and advisability of this recourse to the United Nations, it was agreed that the question should be studied by the UN representatives of the Three Powers.

Ambassador Alphand also suggested that a garrison airlift should be included among the military preparations, while the British Ambassador raised the matter of a civilian airlift. Murphy stated that a garrison airlift was not excluded but pointed to the dangerous psychological effect of a leak with respect to preparations for an airlift. It was finally decided that the Three Embassies at Bonn should proceed with contingency planning for air access.

The British Ambassador advanced the suggestion, concerning the "agency" problem, that the Three Powers might suggest to the Soviet Union that they would be willing to accept a formal "assignment" to the GDR of the Soviet obligation toward them, on the understanding that the Western Powers did not recognize the

¹²⁶To Bonn, airgram G-397, Feb. 19, 1959, secret.

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GDR as a government and that the Soviet Union guaranteed continued performance of these obligations toward the three Powers. On the subject of identification, Caccia declared that Britain might accept a time stamp as an appropriate means for identifying Allied movements. Murphy opposed this idea, but Caccia insisted that British acceptance of the American memorandum was no condition that the explicit rejection of the stamping of papers in paragraph 2 of the memorandum would be omitted.]

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In the end, the British and French accepted the American memorandum subject to the comments, including minor points regarding language, which they had made in the discussion. A paper summarizing the status of Berlin contingency planning as a result of the tripartite talks in Washington and Bonn, which was to serve as the basis for further tripartite discussions, was submitted to the Acting Secretary by Assistant Secretary Merchant on March 4. On that occasion Merchant commented that the principal issue in the tripartite discussions had been "whether and how limited force would be used to demonstrate our determination to maintain our access to Berlin."127

2. Discussions and Studies Within the United States Government on Possible Military and Non-Military Counter-Measures, March 1959

On the same day that Merchant submitted the summary of the status of tripartite planning for countering interference with access to Berlin, Acting Secretary Herter reminded President Eisenhower that the White House directives of January 29 had reserved for governmental decision the question of using additional military force to reopen access routes to Berlin if an initial probe followed by other measures failed to gain this end. Herter emphasized to the President the need for advance planning on the matter and stated that there were two alternative possibilities short of war: (1) the use of substantial force to reopen passage to Berlin, and (2) "pacific counter-blockade, supplemented perhaps by other forms of naval reprisal." Submitting a Department of State memorandum on the pros and cons of the latter course, Herter pointed out that a pacific blockade was an act of reprisal rather than an act of war. The West, he said, by applying this]

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127To Bonn, tel. 1953, Feb. 28, 1959, secret; "Berlin Contingency Planning", Mar. 3, 1959, secret; Memorandum by Merchant (EUR) to Herter, Mar. 4, 1959, secret.

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concept, might frame a strategy whereby interference with access to Berlin would be countered by action at sea, where the Soviet Union would be at a disadvantage, rather than by "invading East Germany", where the disadvantage would be with the West. Such a blockade might take the form of a control of Soviet and East German shipping at the entrances to the Baltic and Black Seas. The control could assume "various degrees of stringency", could also be extended to other principal ports in the North and in the Far East, and could be supplemented by seizure of ships on the high seas. Herter urged that a careful study of such a course of action be made and that the Defense Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff be directed to report on U.S. capabilities for naval reprisals, including counter blockade, in connection with Berlin contingency planning.¹²⁸

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On March 17 Acting Secretary Herter and Secretary of Defense McElroy pointed out in a joint memorandum to the President that they agreed that force should be resorted to in order to maintain access to Berlin, "even at the risk of general war", but that there were alternative uses of force to be considered: (1) "substantial effort" to open ground access by local action; (2) substantial effort to reopen air access if blocked; (3) reprisals against the Communists in other areas, "e.g., Western naval controls on bloc shipping"; and (4) general war measures. Herter and McElroy suggested that an analysis be made of the implications of these four courses of action and that it be decided at what point there should be resort to one of these four alternative uses of force.¹²⁹

This joint State-Defense memorandum was the basis of discussion at a meeting which President Eisenhower held at the White House with top officials of the two Departments and with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Nathan Twining. The President expressed himself in favor of the suggested study on the uses of force and also proposed that the question of economic embargoes be included in the study. The President then

¹²⁸Memorandum by Herter to the President, Mar. 4, 1959, top secret, enclosing Department of State memorandum, "Berlin Contingency Planning: Pacific Counter-Blockade", Mar. 3, top secret.

¹²⁹Memorandum by Herter and McElroy (Defense) to the President regarding Berlin contingency planning, Mar. 17, 1959, top secret.

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inquired whether "force" would involve shooting and speculated "whether our allies would go along with us on one of these courses of action" in the event of a failure of negotiations with the Soviet Union. On the same subject the President asked General Twining what was meant by "a substantial effort to reopen ground access by local action" and whether it would involve "4-5 divisions." Twining replied in the negative and spoke of a "small force", approximately one division. He declared that if more than that were needed it would not be "fruitful" to pursue that course. The purpose of this move would be "to require the Soviets to respond in sufficient force so that they would realize that they were initiating general war." The President also took up the question of a counterblockade and declared "that we should not go into it until there had been a definite provocation" and that it should only be used as a reprisal "and not as pressure (in the absence of Soviet aggression) to try to get a political solution favorable to the Western Powers."¹³⁰

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The proposed study which the President had approved regarding alternative uses of force was completed in April and was submitted to him by Murphy on April 18, together with another study on non-military counter-measures. In his covering memorandum, Murphy pointed to the common conclusion of both studies that it would be difficult to obtain Allied and neutral support for Western counter-measures taken in reply to Soviet actions "designed to enforce technical requirements for GDR supervision rather than to isolate and communize Berlin". Other conclusions were that the success of the measure would depend on how clearly the USSR saw beyond them the risk of general war, "so that convincing preparatory measures, including an appropriate degree of mobilization", would be "essential preconditions." Murphy proposed that the President approve transmittal of the studies to General Norstad for use in the LIVE OAK staff and to the Defense Department for planning on a national basis.¹³¹

¹³⁰Memorandum by Smith (S/P) of conversation among the President, Herter, McElroy (Defense), Twining (JCS), and others, Mar. 17, 1959, top secret.

¹³¹Memorandum by Murphy to the President, Apr. 18, 1959, top secret, with attached memoranda, "Analysis of Non-Military Measures to Induce the Soviet Union to Remove Obstructions to Western Access to Berlin," Apr. 11, secret, "An Analysis of the Political and Military Implications of Alternative Uses of Force to Maintain Access to Berlin," Apr. 15, top secret.

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The National Security Council noted on April 23 at a special meeting that the President had approved the proposals submitted by Murphy with two qualifications: (1) that any advance planning regarding the alternative uses of force would necessarily be subject to review and decision in the light of circumstances as they developed; (2) that the studies would not be shown to the Allies for the time being. The National Security Council also noted the President's approval in principle of the use of these studies in further planning under coordination of a group to be chaired by Deputy Under Secretary of State Murphy and made up of representatives of the Departments of State and Defense, the CIA, the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, and, on an ad hoc basis, other agencies.¹³²

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E. Eisenhower-Macmillan Talks and Tripartite Foreign Ministers Meeting, March 1959

1. Camp David Talks, March 20-22

Meanwhile, the state of tripartite contingency planning had been reviewed by President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Macmillan in the course of their talks at Camp David, March 20-22.¹³³ The two leaders agreed on a minute which was "consistent with and supplementary to" the United States memorandum of February 18 on contingency planning.

On the subject of procedures to be followed at the checkpoints in case of replacement of Soviet personnel by GDR personnel, the President and the Prime Minister stated that the Three Embassies at Bonn, in cooperation with allied military authorities, would draw up appropriate instructions. In so doing, they should be guided by the principle, in case the Soviets had not declared the GDR personnel to be their agents, that the commanders of vehicles, convoys, and trains should not submit to any measures at the hand of GDR personnel going beyond what was necessary to identify allied traffic or what was tripartitely agreed to be necessary to enable the GDR personnel to ensure orderly progress of traffic. The two leaders also declared that in case of forcible interruption

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¹³²Memorandum by Lay (NSC) of the National Security Council, Apr. 28, 1959, top secret.

¹³³See ante, p. 66.

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of Allied traffic the three Governments would consider what further military measures were to be taken, and they explained that the British and American Governments currently did not exclude a military airlift between the time when surface access was obstructed and the point "when it is accepted that political and other related pressures have failed." Finally, the President and the Prime Minister agreed that the Tripartite Ambassadorial Group would continue to consider and coordinate planning and procedures developed by the military authorities of the three Powers in Europe, their Embassies at Bonn, and their Delegations to the United Nations.¹³⁴

2. Western Foreign Ministers Meeting, Washington, March 31

The Eisenhower-Macmillan talks, in producing an agreed U.S.-U.K. position on contingency planning, were naturally helpful to the efforts toward arriving at a tripartite agreed position on that subject. There was now some concern on the part of the French, however, that this position might not be firm enough, and this view was expressed in the tripartite meeting of the Acting Secretary and the Foreign Ministers of Britain and France, with their advisers on March 31. The Three Foreign Ministers met to discuss a report on Berlin contingency planning to be submitted to a NATO Foreign Ministers Meeting scheduled for April 2-4, and in this connection they reviewed the work on the tripartite contingency planning paper then nearing completion.¹³⁵

¹³⁴Anglo-American Talks: March 1959, Agreed Minute; Annex 2, Agreed UK-US Minute on "Contingency Planning" for Berlin; both secret.

¹³⁵It seems that the French Ambassador, at a tripartite Ambassadorial meeting in Washington on March 30, had presented a new formula requiring the Allies to make plans at once for dealing with obstruction of surface access. The present researcher has found neither the French draft nor the minutes of the Ambassadorial meeting, but the foregoing facts can be inferred from a briefing paper, from the record of a private discussion between Herter and Lloyd prior to the Tripartite Foreign Ministers meeting, and also from the record of the latter meeting itself. Memorandum by Merchant (EUR) to Murphy, Mar. 28, 1959, secret; US Del. Minutes of conversation between Herter and Lloyd, Mar. 31, secret.

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There was no disagreement on the principles involved, which Couve defined by saying that the three Powers wanted to maintain their communications, would take all necessary steps to do so, and would make their final decision "on the foregoing basis and in accordance with existing circumstances." But the French Foreign Minister objected to a passage in the draft paper which stated that "the Allies will temporarily suspend traffic", because this amounted to saying something "which results in our suspending traffic and leaves us no way to resume it." This was a question of high and important policy and the situation confronting the Allies represented a "test of our will." If the Allies wanted to start something, Couve said, "the paper must express our will to take action", although he conceded that it was difficult to take a decision in advance of actual developments.

Lloyd agreed with Couve that the wording of this passage seemed to indicate an acceptance of a blockade, and Herter agreed that the statement could be strengthened. Lloyd also questioned the necessity of going to the United Nations, stating that he did not like to contemplate "that organization getting hold of our problems." Couve commented that, if the three Powers should go to the United Nations before taking action themselves, they would tie their hands. Murphy, however, asserted that "there was nothing mandatory about going to the U.N."

The British Foreign Secretary brought up one matter in the Tripartite Foreign Ministers meeting which the United States apparently did not consider subject to tripartite agreement. On March 27 an American transport plane of the C-130 type flying at a level of 25,000 feet via the southern air corridor into Berlin had been harassed by Soviet fighter aircraft on its way to Berlin as well as on its return flight. A protest had immediately been dispatched by the Embassy Bonn to the Soviet controller at the Berlin Air Safety Center (BASC).¹³⁶ The British Foreign Secretary,

¹³⁶From Bonn, tel. 2160, Mar. 28, 1959, secret; msg, IDC 25299A, USAF, Ramstein, Germany to USCINCEUR, Paris, Mar. 27, top secret. On Apr. 4, the Soviet Foreign Minister protested the American flight of Mar. 27 as a "crude violation of existing procedure and established practice of flights over the German Democratic Republic". The United States in a note of Apr. 13, rejected this protest and stated that it did not recognize "any limitation to the right to fly at any altitude in the corridors." See, Documents on Germany, 1944-1961, pp. 444-446.

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referring to this incident, wondered whether the intention was to repeat such flights above the level of 10,000 feet.

Herter explained that the United States Air Force, in planning for a garrison airlift, had noted that the planes to be used needed to fly above 10,000 feet for maximum operating efficiency and therefore wanted to establish this as normal procedure. A representative of the Defense Department confirmed that the United States planned to continue these flights but only under conditions of unlimited visibility. Lloyd wondered whether this matter should not have been cleared with the Allies and inquired what the point was of continuing this practice now that "our right had been asserted." He asked whether "we were not trying to create an incident to make negotiations impossible"; if an American flyer should be killed, the United States would not want to go to a meeting with the Soviet Union. After Couve had stated that the Western Powers by not continuing to do what they had a right to do would accept the Soviet position denying this right, the British Foreign Secretary conceded that this was a matter for the United States to decide but said that he still thought it "unwise" and unnecessary to continue these high-altitude flights.¹³⁷

F. The Berlin Contingency Planning Paper of April 4, 1959

The many months of drafting and discussion regarding contingency planning finally resulted in a paper which represented agreed policy of the three Western Governments for countering any interference with access to Berlin. The new contingency planning paper was dated April 4, 1959.

With regard to preparatory measures, the paper provided that, in view of a possible withdrawal of the USSR from its functions with respect to Berlin, the three Western Powers would demonstrate their determination to maintain free access to Berlin by planning quiet preparatory and precautionary military measures. These measures would be designed not to create alarm but to be detectable by Soviet intelligence, and they would be implemented as soon as Allied agreement was reached. The military authorities of the three Powers would also plan more elaborate military measures

¹³⁷US Del. Minutes of Tripartite Foreign Ministers Meeting, Mar. 31, 1959 (USDEL/MC-15), secret; "Report to NATO on Berlin Contingency Planning," Apr. 1, 1959, secret.

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in Europe which would be generally observable, including measures to be implemented after the Soviet Government had turned over its functions with respect to Berlin to the GDR, and measures to be implemented after Allied traffic had been obstructed. Planning of the foregoing measures would be carried out on a tripartite basis under General Norstad's general supervision, and the exact arrangements for the planning would be further concerted between the military authorities of the three countries. (Paragraph 1.)

At an appropriate time the three Ambassadors in Moscow would inform the Soviet Government that the three Powers continued to hold the Soviet Union responsible under quadripartite agreements concerning Berlin and that their right to unrestricted access to Berlin would not be affected by the Soviet Government's withdrawal from its occupation functions with respect to Berlin, whether it involved the checkpoints or the Berlin Air Safety Center. They would state, furthermore, that the three Powers would not tolerate any GDR interference with traffic to and from Berlin and would act on the assumption that the Soviet Union would maintain absolute separation of Soviet and Soviet Zone aircraft from the aircraft of the three Powers in the Berlin corridors and the Berlin control zone and would give assurance of safety of all of the three Powers' aircraft in these areas. (Paragraph 2.)

A tripartitely agreed draft of a public statement would be drawn up to explain the procedure which the three Powers planned to follow when GDR personnel had taken over control functions at the checkpoints. (Paragraph 3.)

With regard to the much discussed "agency principle", the paper declared that, if the Soviet Union should propose a compromise whereby it would expressly authorize the GDR personnel to function as Soviet agents performing Soviet functions relating to the access of the three Powers to Berlin, the latter should consider accepting such a compromise with appropriate safeguards for their rights. (Paragraph 4.)

On the controversial subject of the identification of vehicles, the tripartite paper declared that there was no objection to providing "mere identification" of the vehicles of the three Powers for the information of GDR personnel at the checkpoints. In case of Soviet withdrawal from the checkpoints, the three Powers would continue normal traffic by Autobahn and rail, but they would substitute those procedures which they themselves had determined to be necessary to identify Allied movements and whatever procedures might

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be tripartitely agreed to be reasonable to enable the GDR personnel to ensure orderly traffic on the Autobahn and railroad. The three Embassies in Bonn should complete the drafting of instructions to Allied personnel regarding the procedures to be followed at the checkpoints and in so doing should make provision for a situation in which the Soviet Government had acknowledged the GDR personnel to be its agents and also for a situation in which it had not done so. The three Embassies, in conjunction with the military headquarters, would develop appropriate procedures for identification of Allied movements and would draft the above-mentioned instructions in conformity with these procedures. (Paragraphs 5, 6, and 7.)

The three Powers should consider the possibility of substituting their own personnel for the Soviet personnel withdrawn from the checkpoints. (Paragraph 8.)

On the crucial subject of a probe of Soviet intentions, the paper stated that the three Powers would make "a probe or probes" to determine whether the Soviets were prepared to use force or to permit the use of force to prevent Allied passage. The vehicles would be identified to the GDR personnel in accordance with procedure agreed upon by the three Powers, but no further inspection or control would be allowed. The vehicles would proceed until their passage was physically obstructed and would not fire unless fired upon. If fired upon, they would take whatever defensive action seemed necessary. (Paragraph 9.)

If the initial probes were obstructed, the three Powers would make efforts to increase pressure on the Soviet Union and the GDR. World opinion would be mobilized against the USSR as a violator of agreements and a threat to peace and, the paper stated, "a possibility is that the situation could be taken to the United Nations Security Council and perhaps, in the event of a Soviet veto, to a special session of the General Assembly." (The quoted wording, indicating merely a possibility of recourse to the United Nations, is primarily a reflection of the strong French reservations on the whole subject of the United Nations.) With regard to pressure by military preparations, the paper stated that these could include measures "which would be readily observable." Other forms of diplomatic pressure would also be considered, including the withdrawal of the three Western Ambassadors from Moscow, but there was no mention of the evacuation of dependents. (Paragraph 10.)

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With regard to the paramount question of the use of military force, it was stated that the three Powers would "make jointly the appropriate decisions for restoring freedom of passage" and that the measures required for implementing them should be the object of a study by the tripartite staff in Paris, i.e., General Norstad's special staff LIVE OAK. The military decisions might be supplemented by economic measures. (Paragraph 11.)

In the matter of air access, the three Powers should take steps to maintain their unrestricted air access to Berlin as essential to maintaining the city's status and security. The three Embassies in Bonn, in consultation with the tripartite staff in Paris and with the appropriate military headquarters, should review and complete contingency planning to deal with certain aspects of the Berlin air access question. These would include (a) Soviet withdrawal from the Berlin Air Safety Center (BASC); (b) Soviet or East German threats against flight safety in the Berlin air corridors and control zone; (c) measures to continue civil air services if the existing situation should change; (d) establishment of a "garrison airlift" of Allied personnel and material in case of interruption of Allied surface traffic; (e) substitution of military for civilian aircraft if the latter should cease operations; (f) interference by the Soviet Union or the East Germans with flights in the Berlin air corridors or control zone above 10,000 feet. With respect to the last issue, it was suggested that it might be resolved "by a simple tripartite agreement to fly at an altitude appropriate to efficient operations of individual aircraft." (Paragraph 12.)

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The paper also provided for planning responsibilities and coordination. The Tripartite Ambassadorial Group in Washington would be responsible for over-all coordination of contingency planning and for drafting a public statement in case GDR control at the checkpoints was established. The three Embassies at Bonn would have primary responsibility for recommendations regarding identification of Allied movements, instructions concerning procedures at the checkpoints, and air-access planning. General Norstad's tripartite staff at Paris would be responsible for coordinating and planning the preparatory military measures, for studying measures to restore freedom of access, and for assisting the three Embassies at Bonn in carrying out their responsibilities. The Ambassadors of the three Powers to the United Nations would make recommendations to their Governments regarding a possible approach to the United Nations. The Headquarters of the three

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Powers at Berlin would give the three Embassies at Bonn all necessary assistance. Finally, the military authorities in each of the three countries would be responsible for purely national planning in support of tripartitely planned measures. (Paragraph 13.)¹³⁸

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The contingency planning paper of April 4 provided the framework for tripartite Berlin contingency planning and was gradually filled out in the months that followed by specific and detailed planning in accordance with the provisions of the paper. 1

¹³⁸"Berlin Contingency Planning", Apr. 4, 1959, secret.

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